

# SMASH

## COMICS

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FEBRUARY  
NO. 40

MIDNIGHT  
VS  
BULLETS  
BALOW





**WEB COMIC  
UNIVERSE.COM**



# A BELL RINGER!



PACKED  
WITH  
THRILLS

FEATURING AMERICA'S GREATEST COMIC CHARACTER

## BLACKHAWK

ALSO THE SNIPER, SECRET WAR NEWS, PHANTOM CLIPPER  
AND MANY OTHERS

# DON'T MISS THEM!

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# MIDNIGHT



"Three things will drive a man from home,  
A roof that leaks,  
A house that reeks,  
A wife who scolds when'er she speaks"  
... William Shakespeare ..."



**NO** ONE COULD EXPLAIN "WHY" **"BULLETS"** BALOW SUDDENLY AND MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH WITHOUT LEAVING A SINGLE TRACE...

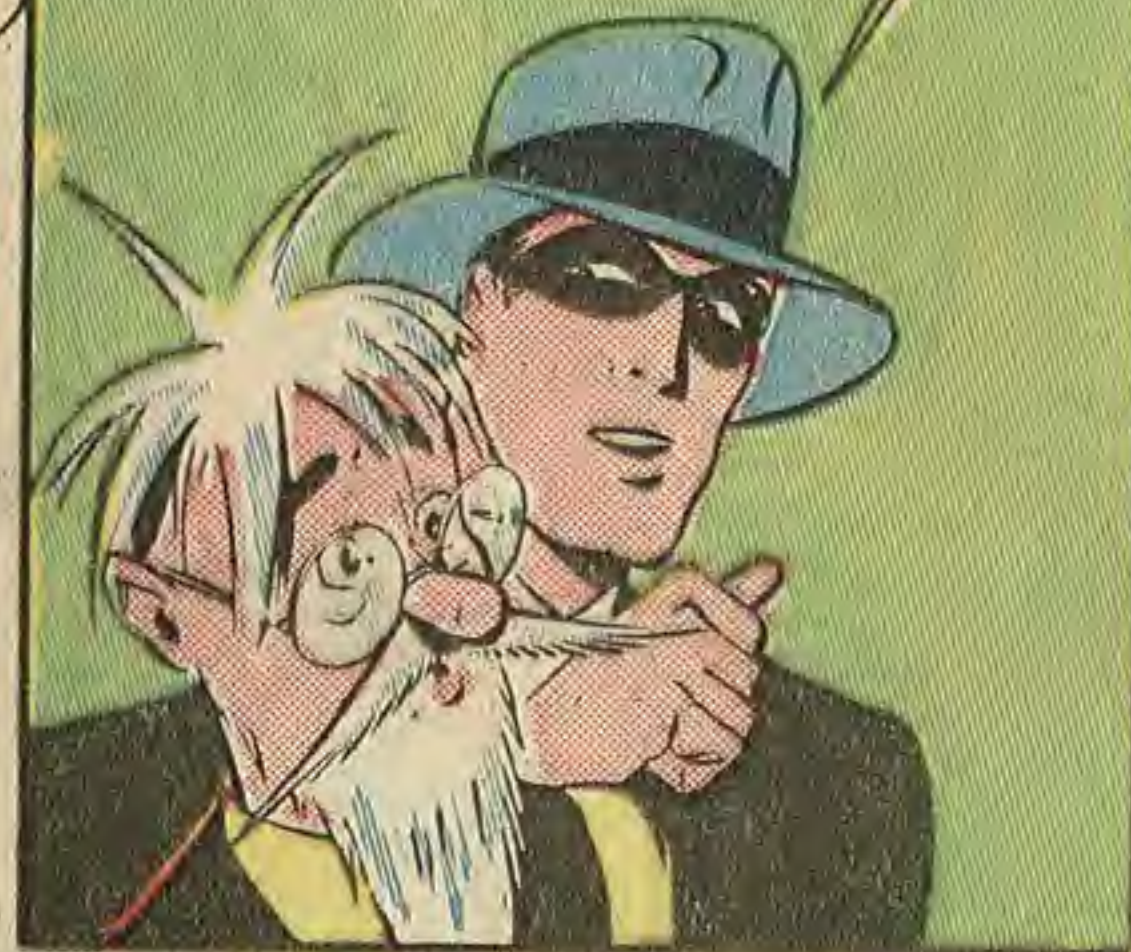
THE LAW ISN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN AFTER "BULLETS" BALOW FOR SIX MONTHS... MIDNIGHT HAS EVEN TRIED TO TRAIL HIM...

THEN WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED TO BALOW?

AT FIRST I THOUGHT HE MIGHT HAVE ESCAPED TO FOREIGN LANDS, BUT THE WAR WOULD'VE SCARED HIM AWAY!



I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT I THINK BALOW HAS FINALLY GIVEN US THE SLIP. THERE'S BEEN NO CLUE TO HIS WHEREABOUTS FOR EIGHT SOLID WEEKS!



HE'S LEAVING!

NOW WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



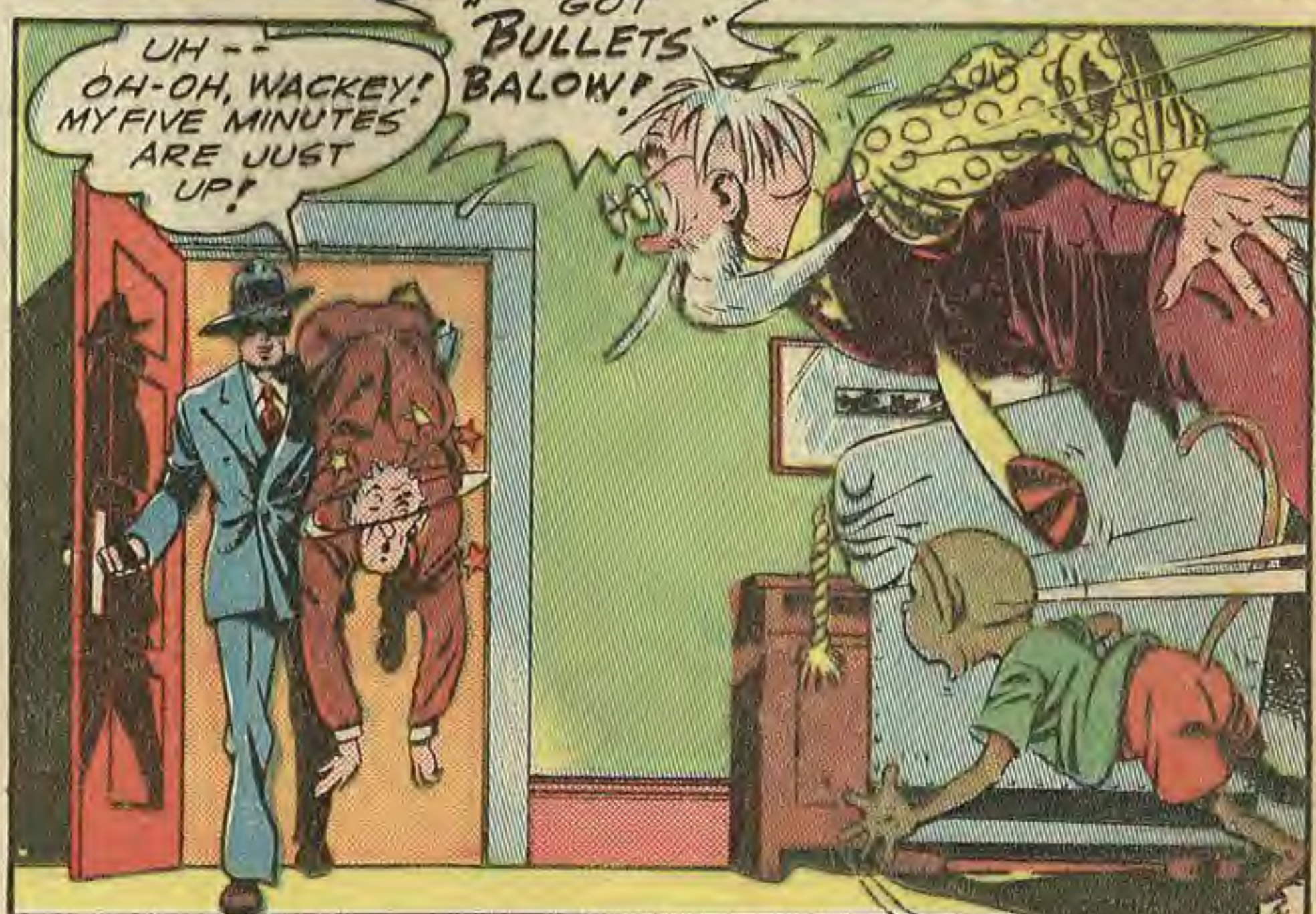
DON'T KNOW. JUST FOR A RIDE. GOT TO DO SOME THINKING! I'LL BE BACK IN ABOUT FIVE MINUTES!



IT'S ALREADY BEEN TWO MINUTES... WONDER IF HE'LL MAKE IT?



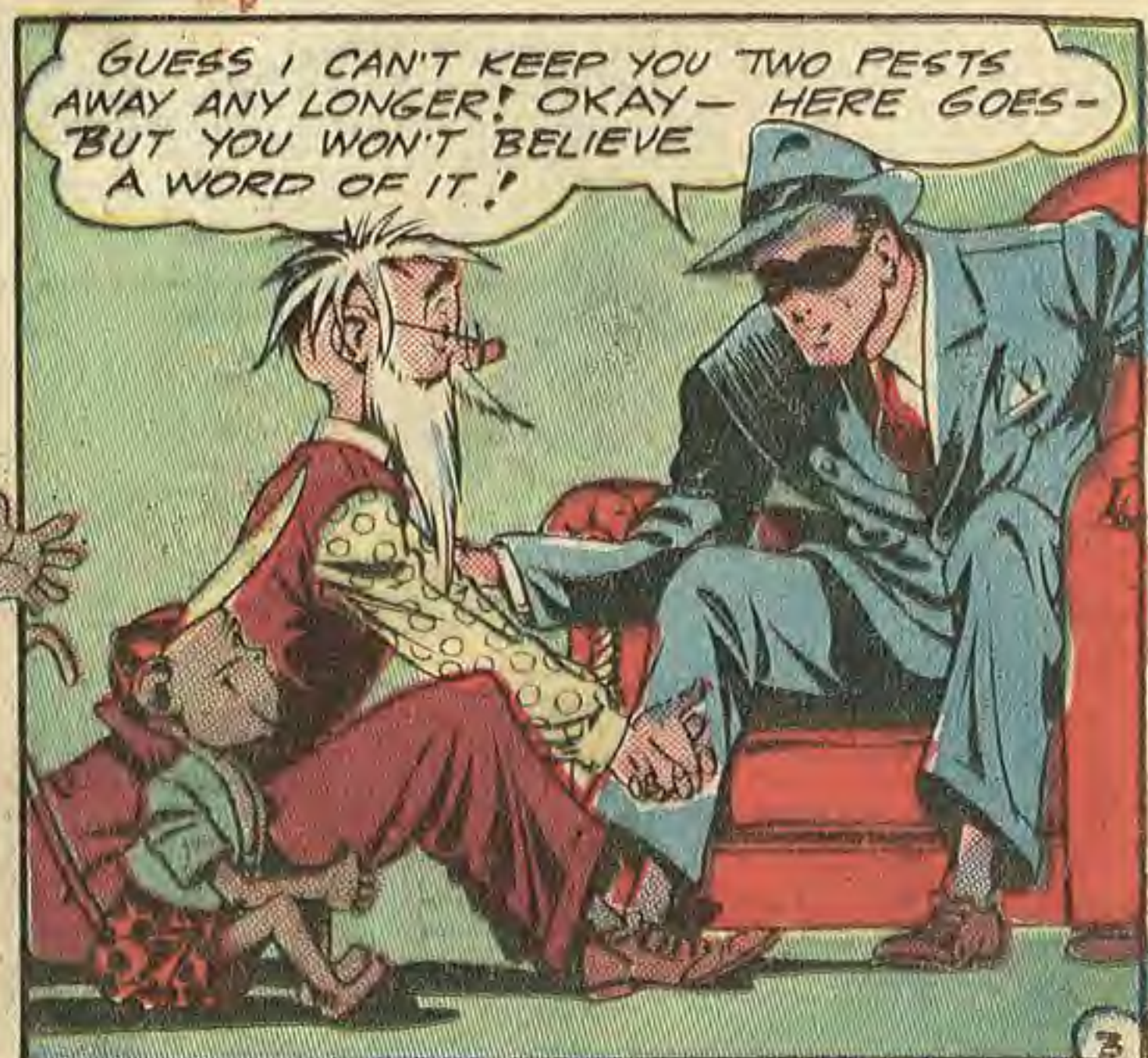
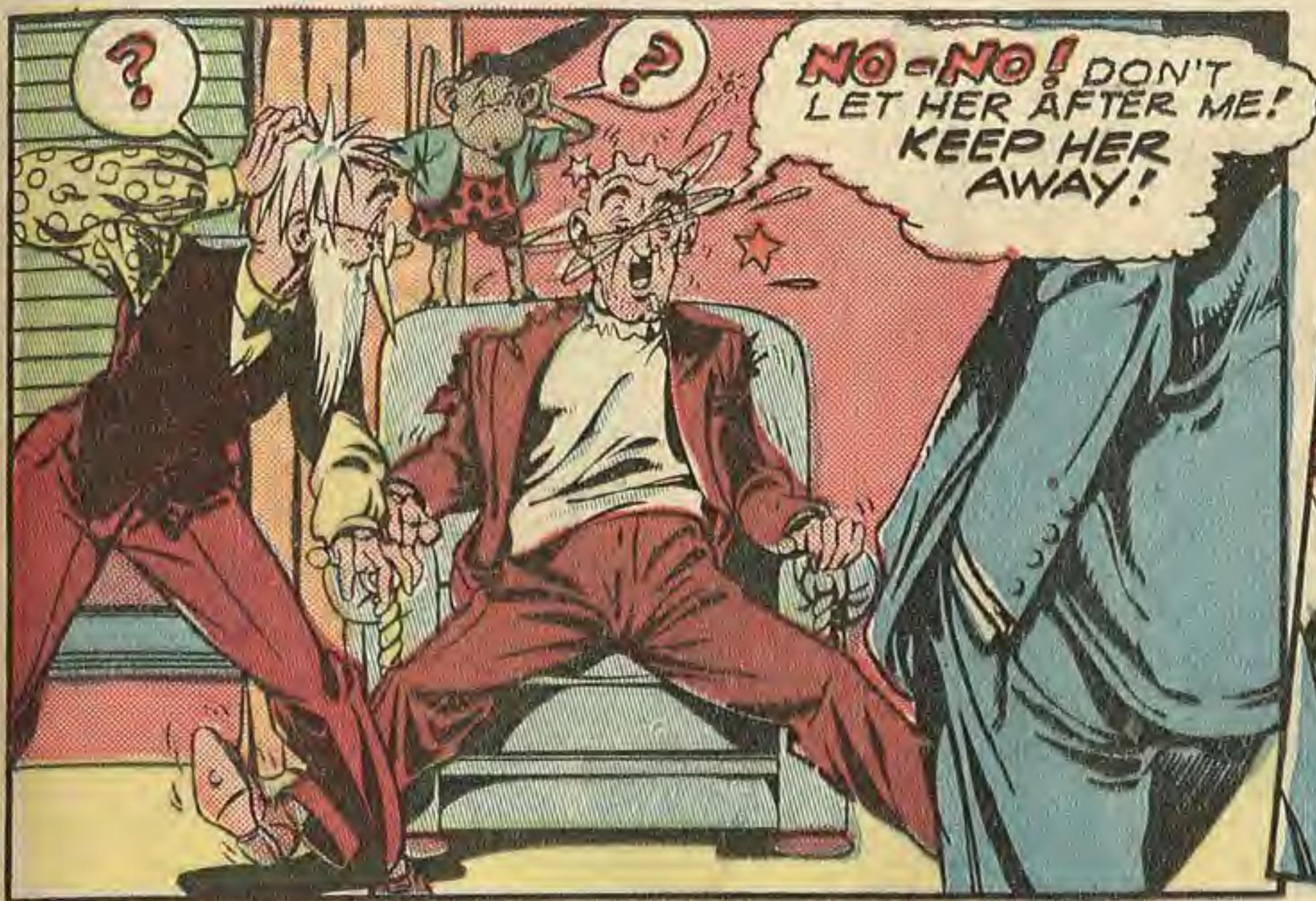
HE WON'T MAKE IT, GABBY! AT LAST MIDNIGHT'S BEEN WRONG! HE SAID HE WOULD BE BACK IN FIVE MINUTES AND....



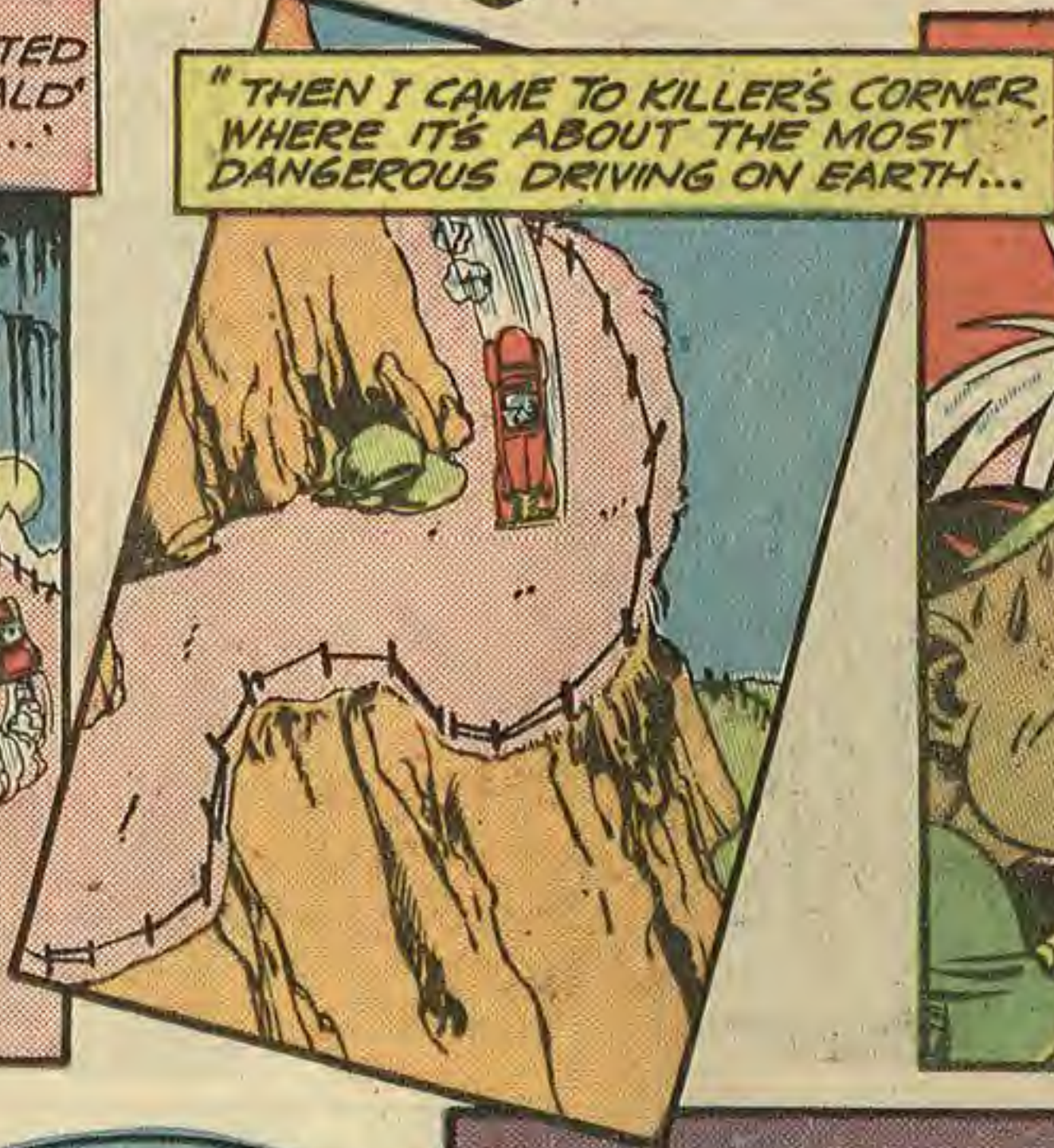
UH -- OH-OH, WACKY! MY FIVE MINUTES ARE JUST UP!

YOU'VE GOT "BULLETS" BALOW!

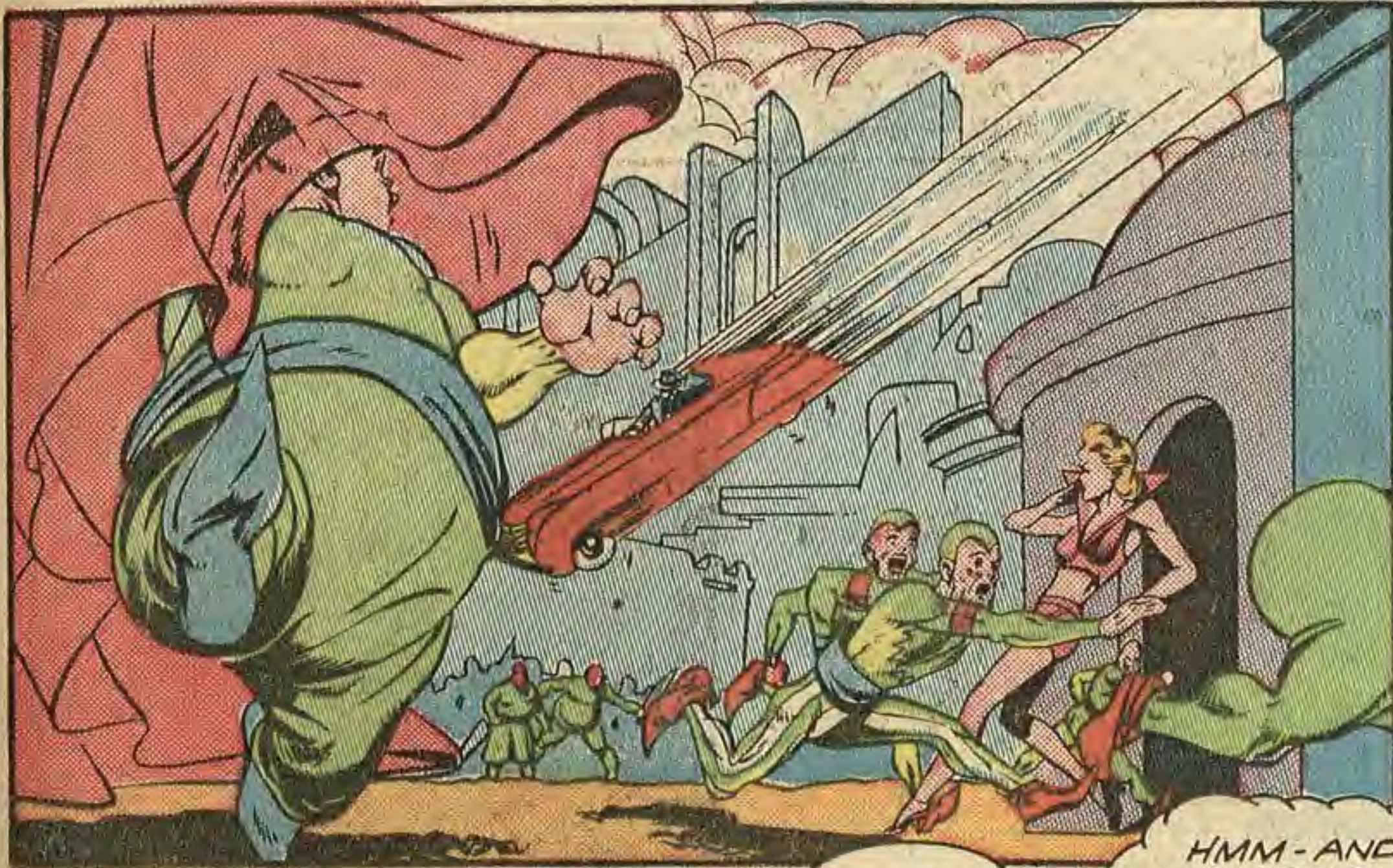
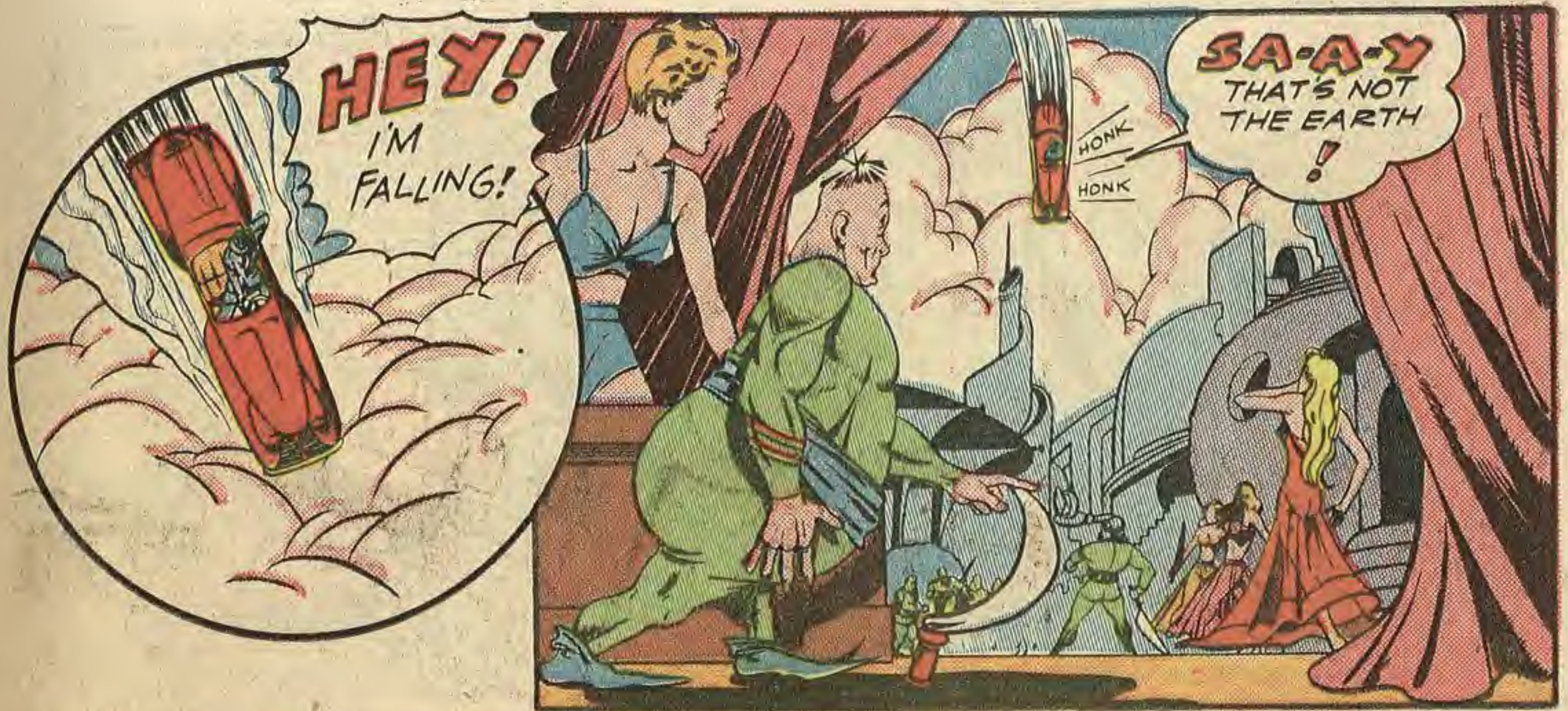




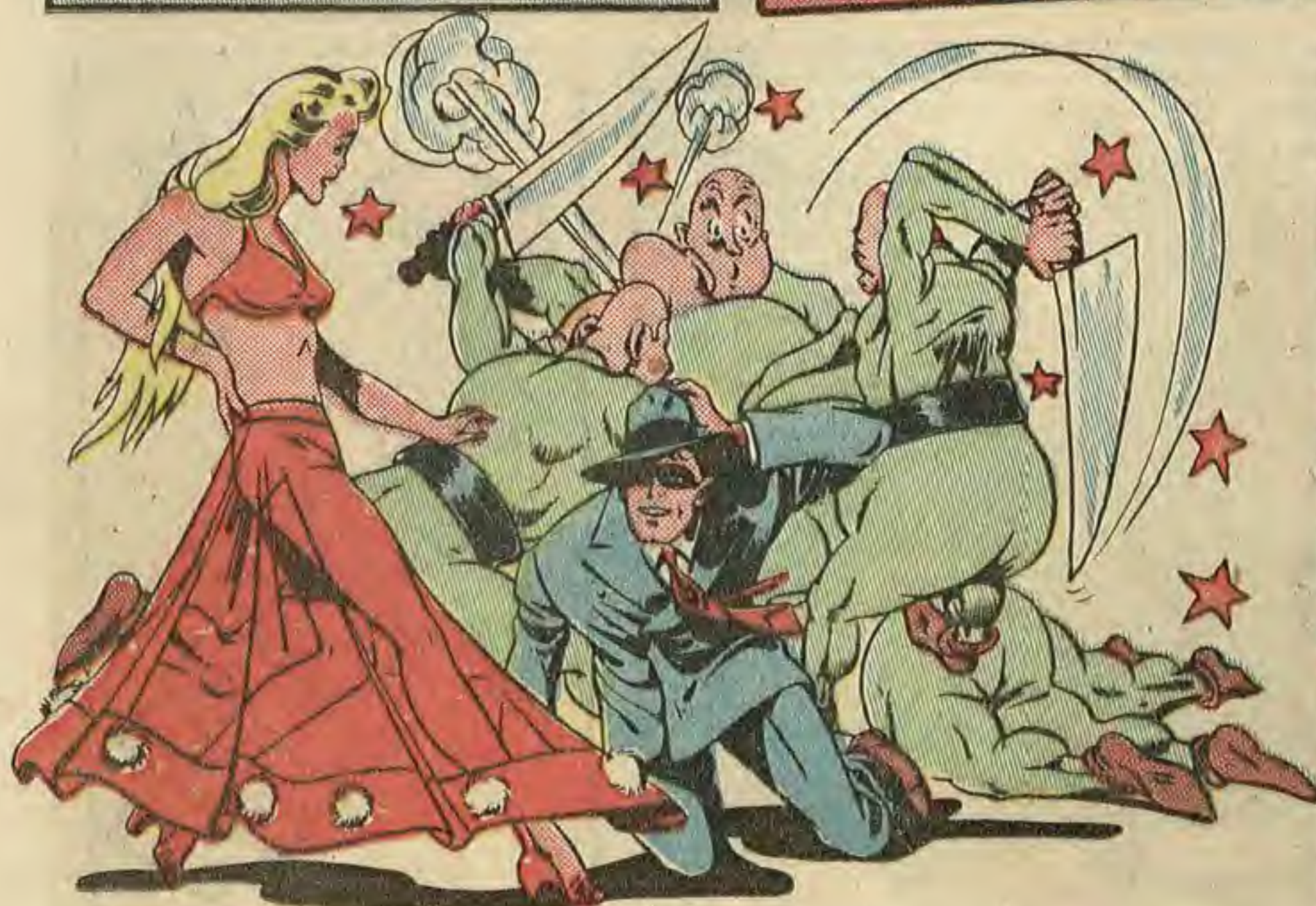




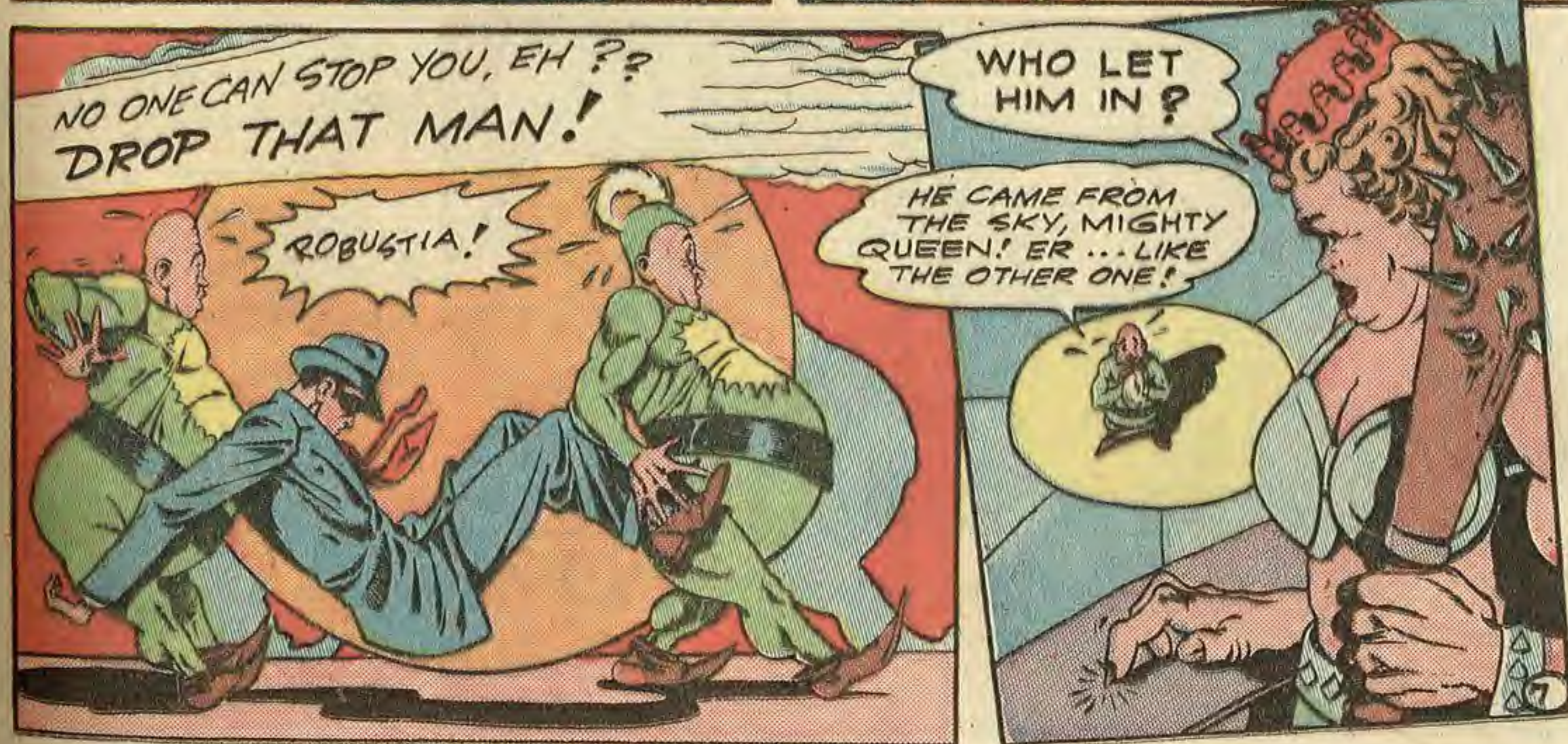












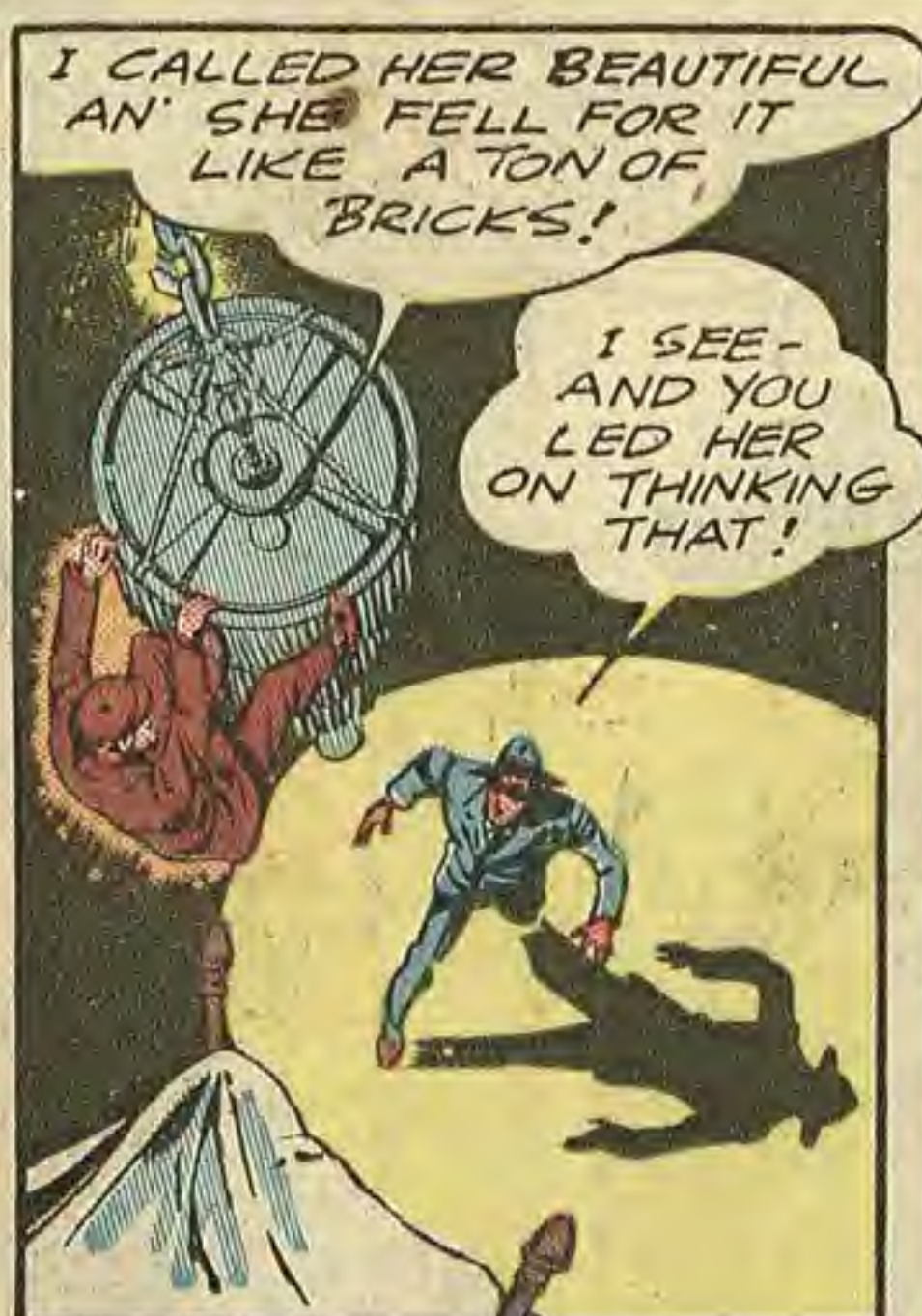
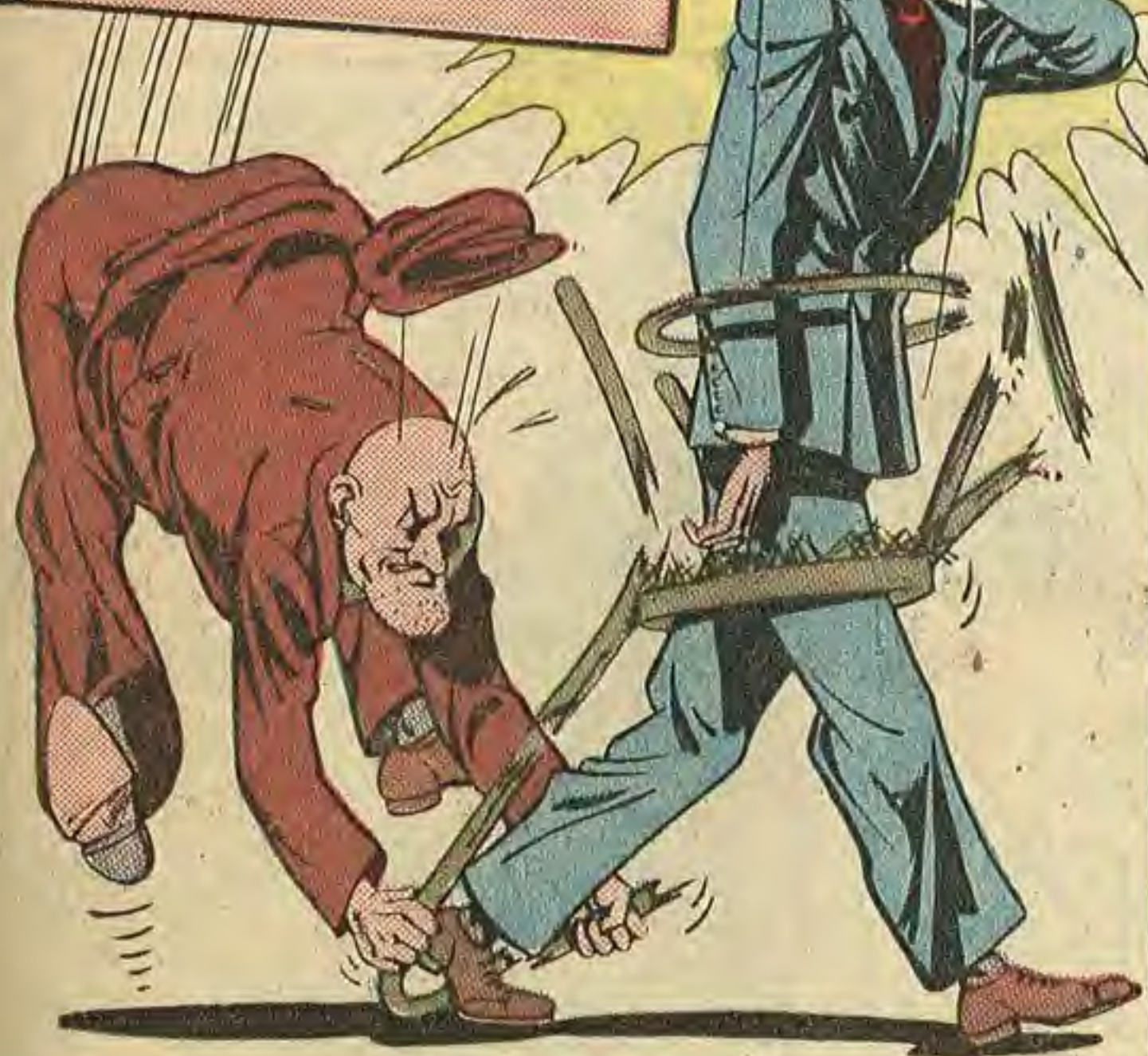




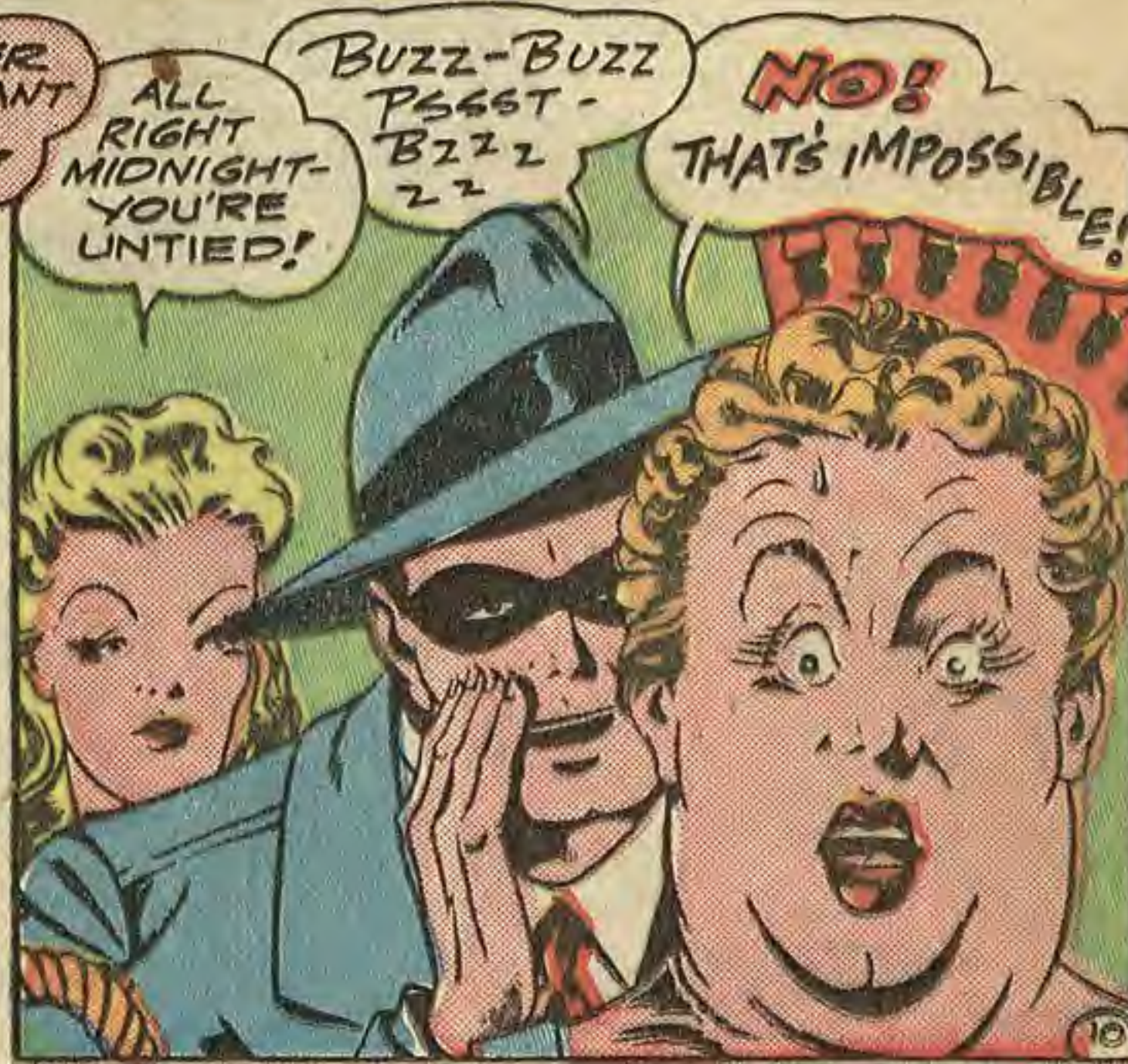
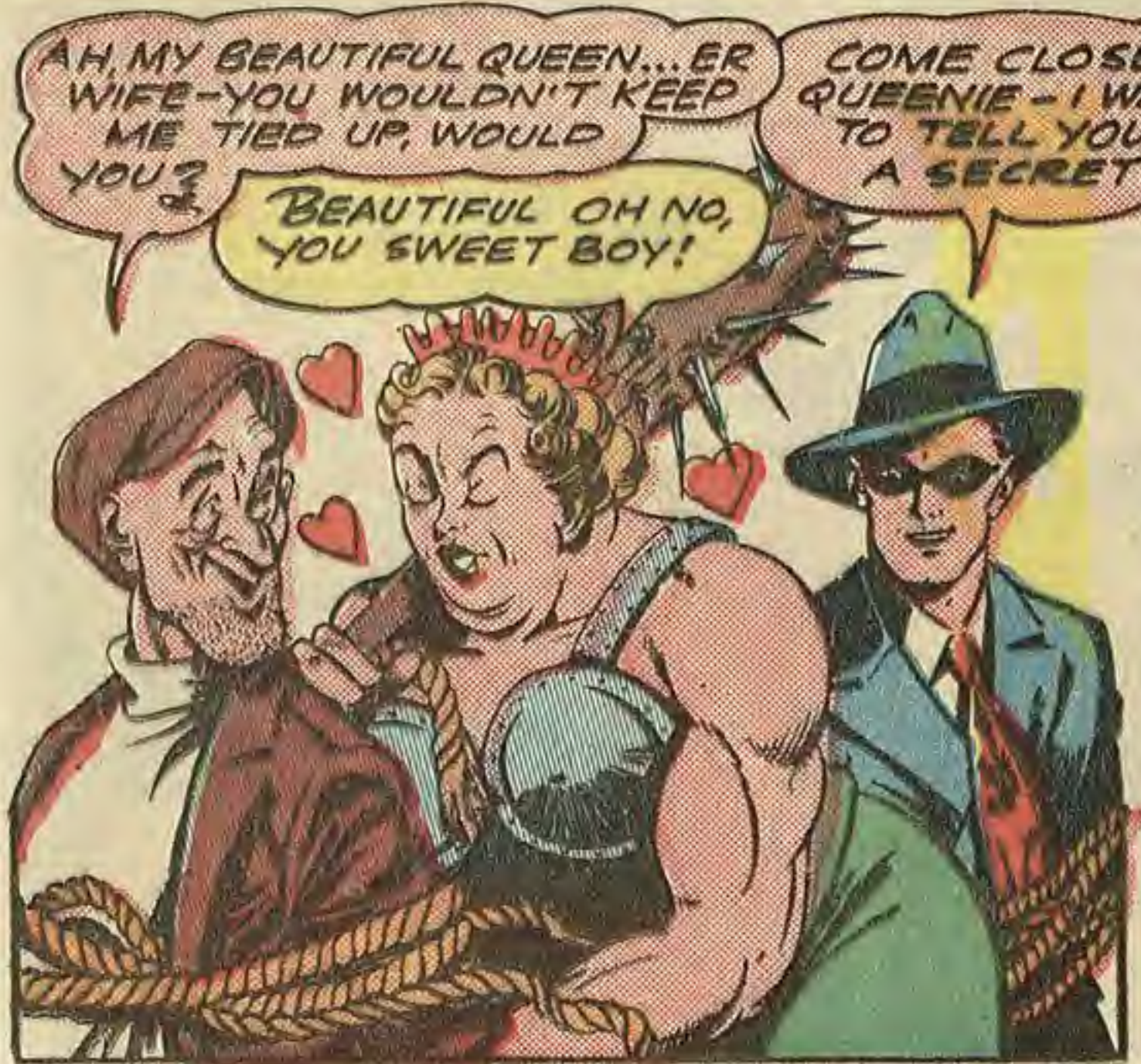




TUT-TUT - A LADIES BED ROOM! COME ON OUT, BULLETS- I SEE YOU UNDER THE BED!













# ESPIONAGE

THE BATTLE OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS! AMERICA'S FIRST GREAT OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE YELLOW OCTOPUS OF THE PACIFIC! ONCE AGAIN THE FAMOUS MARINES MAKE HISTORY, AS THE YELLOW ENEMY QUAKES AND TURNS TAIL BEFORE THE RINGING CRY—"THE MARINES ARE COMING" BUT IT IS A BITTER STRUGGLE, AND EACH ISLAND HOLDS ITS OWN STORY... ONE IN PARTICULAR, THE STORY OF A BLIND MAN WHO COULD SEE... AND HIS DAUGHTER WHOSE EYES WERE BLIND!





A SMALL LAUNCH RACES TO THE SIDE OF A JAP HELD ISLAND...



HALT!  
..WHO..?

HOW DARE YOU  
HOLD A PISTOL TO  
BARON BLITZ, OF  
THE NAZI HIGH  
COMMAND?



SO SORRY!  
PASS ON  
PLEASE!

I HAVE COME TO CONFER  
WITH BARON HOLSTEIN,  
MY COUNTRYMAN, AT  
HIS CASTLE IN THE  
INTERIOR!

SAFELY  
BEYOND  
EARSHOT,  
ALONG  
A  
JUNGLE  
PATH,  
THE  
SUPPOSED  
PRUSSIAN  
LIFTS A  
HAT TO  
REVEAL  
THE  
FEATURES  
OF BLACK  
X, ACE  
OF THE  
ALLIED  
ESPIONAGE

WELL, BATU,  
WE'RE PAST  
THE JAP'S  
LINES!

NOW  
FIND  
CASTLE,  
MASTER,  
BUT WHY?



PERHAPS I SHOULD  
EXPLAIN MORE CLEARLY,  
BATU. SEE, THE SOLOMON  
ISLANDS WERE A GERMAN  
POSSESSION BEFORE 1914.  
THE JAPS IN THAT WAR,  
TOOK IT FROM THEM...



HOWEVER, THE JAPS  
ALLOWED HOLSTEIN TO  
KEEP HIS BARONIAL  
CASTLE HERE. NOW  
THE JAPS AND GERMANS  
ARE ALLIED...



..SO, IF THE JAPS ARE  
DRIVEN FROM THE  
BEACH, THEY'LL HOLD  
THE CASTLE AS A  
FORT!

OUR JOB IS TO KEEP  
THE JAPS OUT OF THE  
CASTLE, SOMEHOW.  
BECAUSE THEY'D HOLD  
OUT INDEFINITELY IN  
THAT SORT OF FORT!

NIPS AND NAZIS  
ARE PALS. BUT  
HOW DO WE  
DO IT?

AH! THAT WILL TAKE  
FINESSE! BUT NOW  
VORWAERTS!.. HEIL  
HITLER!



















THIS WAY INTO THE TOWER!



TRAPPED!!

BARON HOLSTEIN!



THE TOWER ROOM! WERE SAFE HERE!



I AM BLIND-- BUT I HEAR WELL! DON'T MOVE OR I SHOOT! EXPLAIN THE DISTURBANCE, PLEASE!



BLIND! HE DOESN'T SEE THAT I'M **NOT** IN MY NAZI UNIFORM!.. WE CAN TRICK HIM...



ACH, BARON, THE VERDAMMTE AMERICAN MARINES ARE HERE! THEY SEEK OUR LIVES, HIDE US... FOR THE FATHERLAND!







BUT IT IS THE GIRL WHO FALLS

ONLY A MOMENT LATER...

BLIND  
WRETCH..  
AAHHH!

IT IS YOU WHO  
WERE BLIND, ELZIA!  
GOODBYE, MY CHILD  
IT IS BETTER SO!

GO! HELP YOUR  
AMERICAN MARINES!  
HELP MAKE A  
DECENT WORLD!  
UHHHH!!

THE ZERO HOUR..  
THE MARINES  
ARE COMING!

HERE WE COME,  
READY OR NOT!

RETREAT  
TO CASTLE!

BANG!

BAM

BUT, AT THE CASTLE...

USE CASTLE  
AS FORT!  
AGHH!!

TELL IT  
TO THE  
MARINES!

AND SO, ANOTHER  
PACIFIC OUTPOST  
PASSES INTO THE  
HANDS OF OLD  
GLORY

BLACK X!! MIGHTA  
KNOWN YOU HELD  
THE CASTLE FOR US

ME!

I'LL TELL YOU THE STORY  
SOMETIME, ABOUT A BLIND  
MAN WHO WASN'T BLIND..



# BOZO THE ROBOT



WHEN HUGH HAZZARD AND HIS INDESTRUCTIBLE IRON MAN, BOZO, MEET UP WITH ANOTHER SEEMINGLY INDESTRUCTIBLE IRON MAN—THINGS ARE BOUND TO HAPPEN, WHICH BRINGS TO AN END, ONE OF THEM --- WHICH ONE ?? WELL, READ THE STORY -----

by GEORGE E. BRENNER.

OUR STORY BEGINS IN THE HOME OF HOMER TWIPPLE, SELF STYLED INVENTOR AND GENIUS....



THERE, IT'S FINISHED - I'LL TAKE IT UP ON TH' ROOF AN' TRY IT OUT--

WITH ME AN' THE OTHER IRON MAN FIGHTIN' FER JUSTICE, IT'S GONNA BE JUST TOO BAD FER THEM CROOKS--



NOW - I'LL GIT INSIDE --



AN' I'M OFF TO A FLYING START----



THE PSEUDO IRON MAN  
FLIES INTO SPACE.



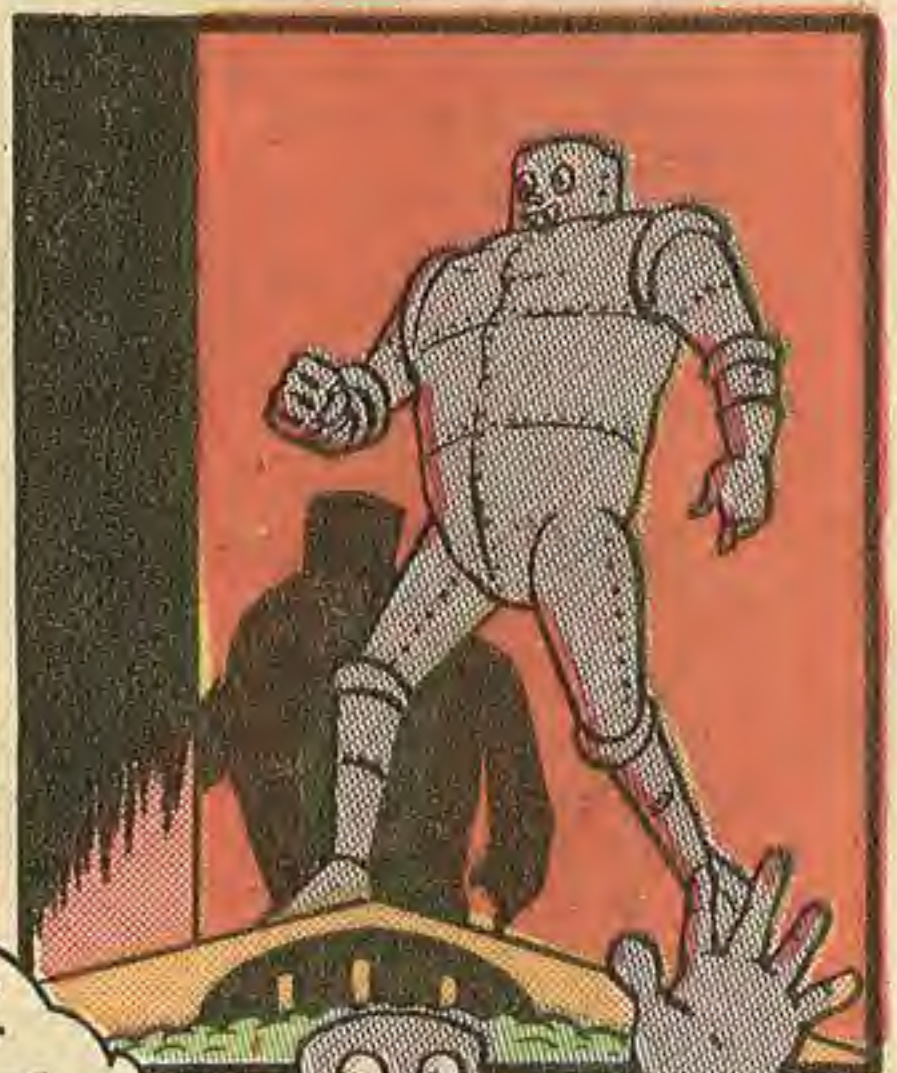
WHOOEY!! IN THE  
FUTURE, I'LL **WALK** TO  
ANYPLACE I WANT  
TO GO----



MEANWHILE, HUGH HAZZARD,  
INSIDE THE REAL IRON MAN, IS  
ON THE TRAIL OF SABOTEURS....



AND BY A STROKE OF FATE,  
TWIDDLE HAS PICKED UP  
THE SCENT OF THE SAME  
TRAIL -----



AH! THERE  
THEY  
ARE--

DOT NOISE,  
VOT ISS  
IT??

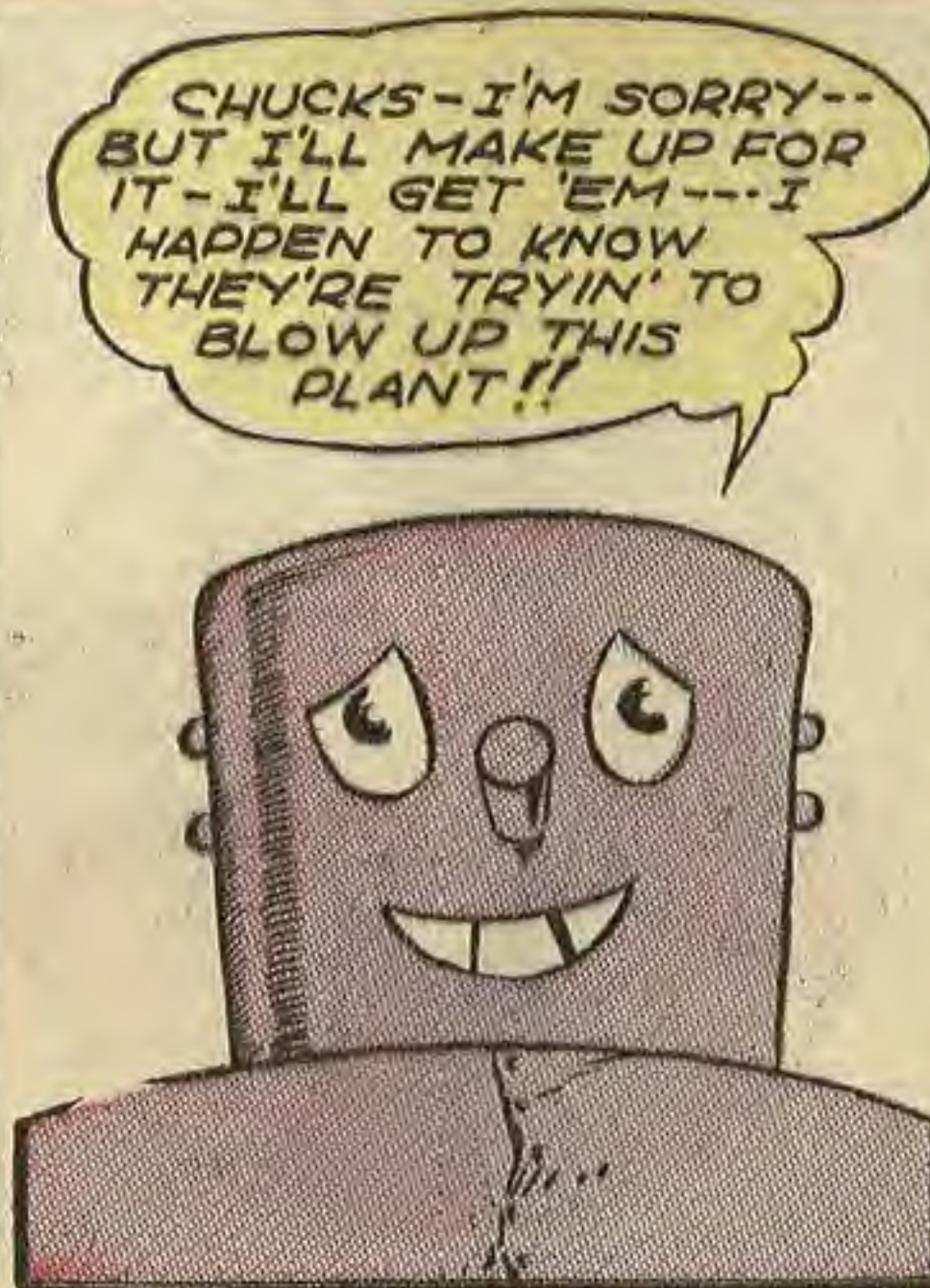
LOOK!! DER  
IRON MAN--  
RUN--VE COME  
BACK LATER!!

HALT! STOP!!--  
IN THE NAME OF  
THE LAW--CHUCKLE--  
ANYHOW, I SCARED  
'EM!!--I'LL TURN  
HERE AN' CUT  
'EM OFF--

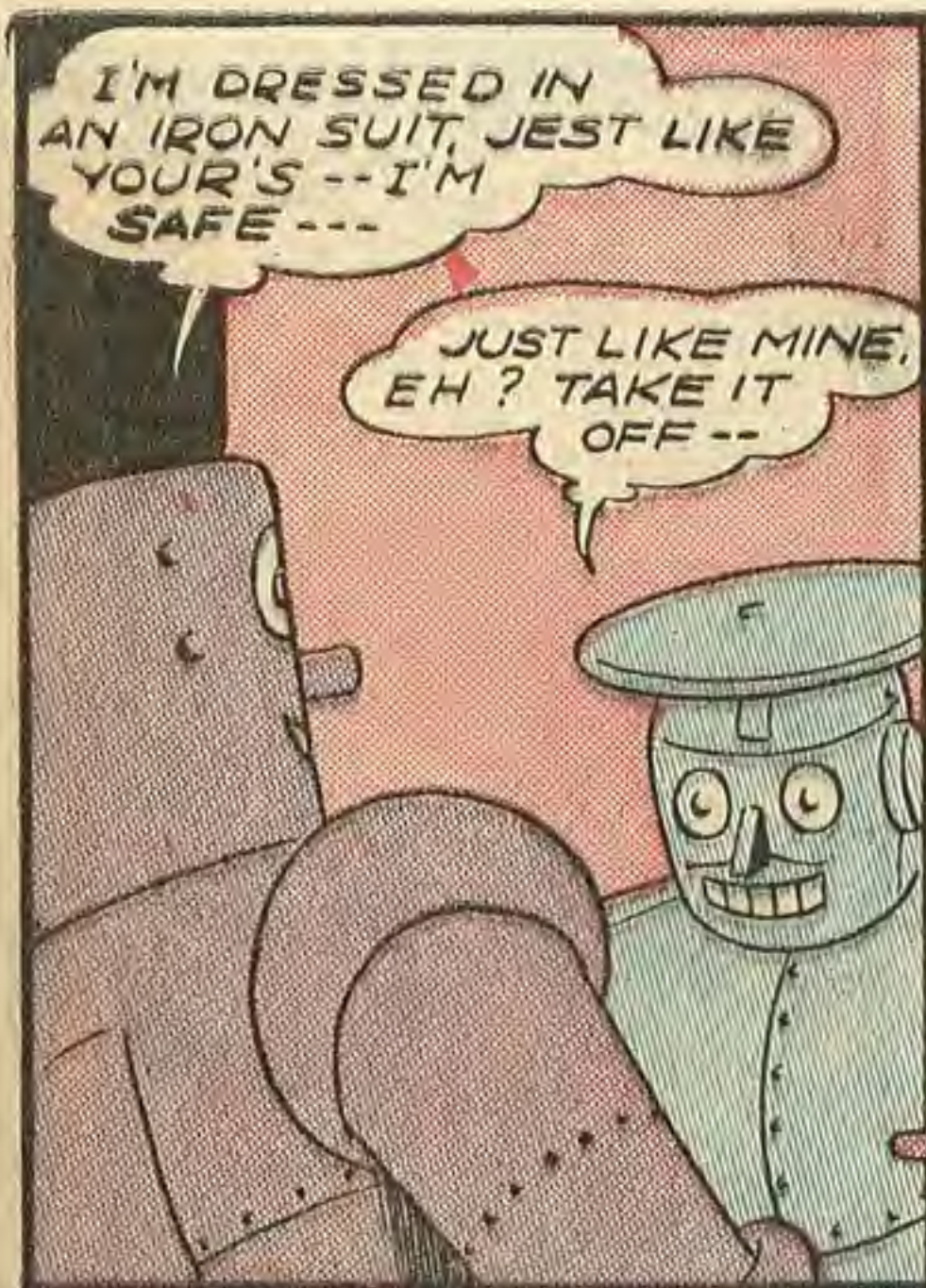




AT THIS MOMENT, BOZO ARRIVES AT THE SCENE---







MEANWHILE, BOZO AND TWIPPLE TRAIL THE SPIES AND APPROACH THE SPOT WHERE THE LOOK-OUT STANDS GUARD...

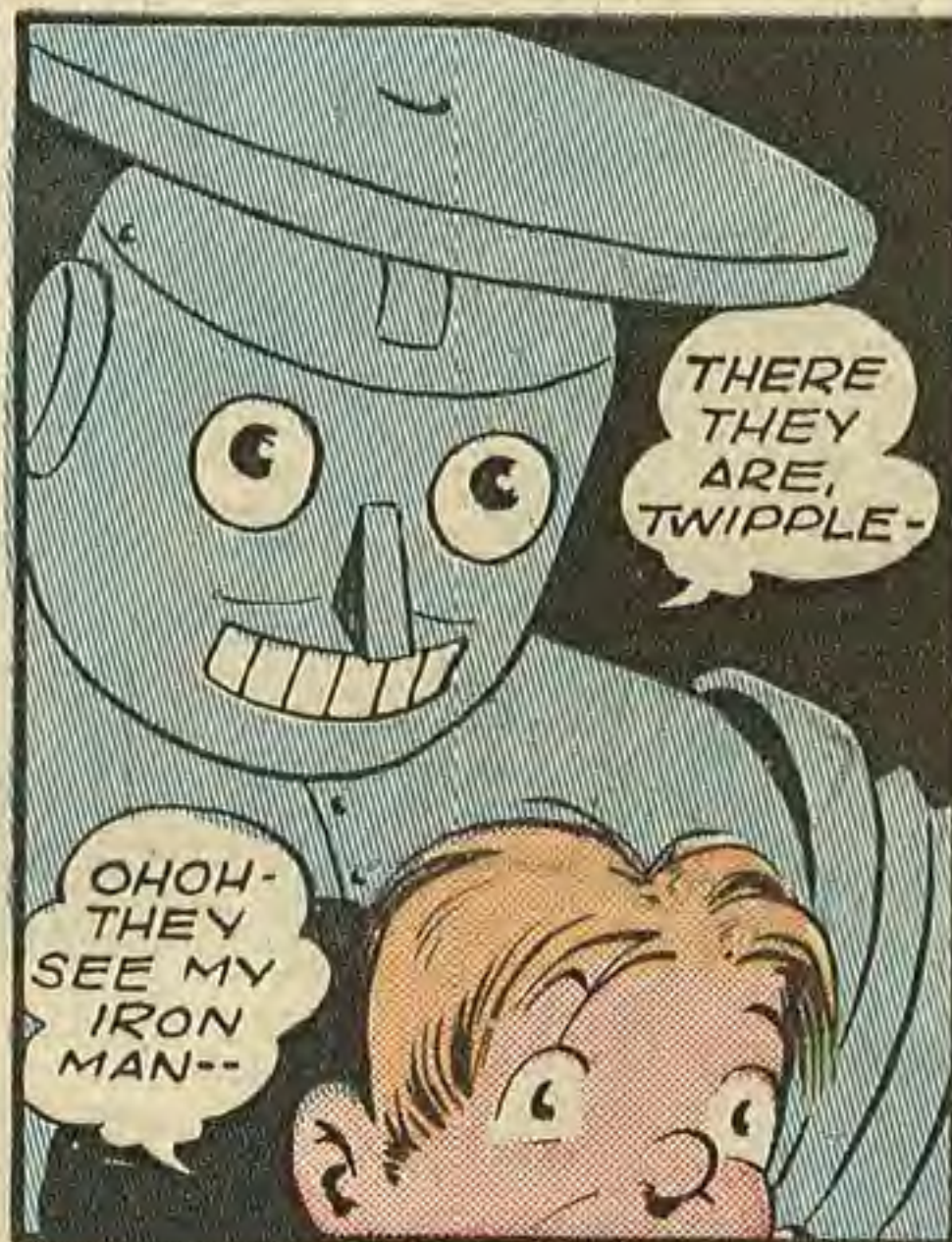




BY NOW, THE SPIES ARE  
NEARING THE EAST WALL--



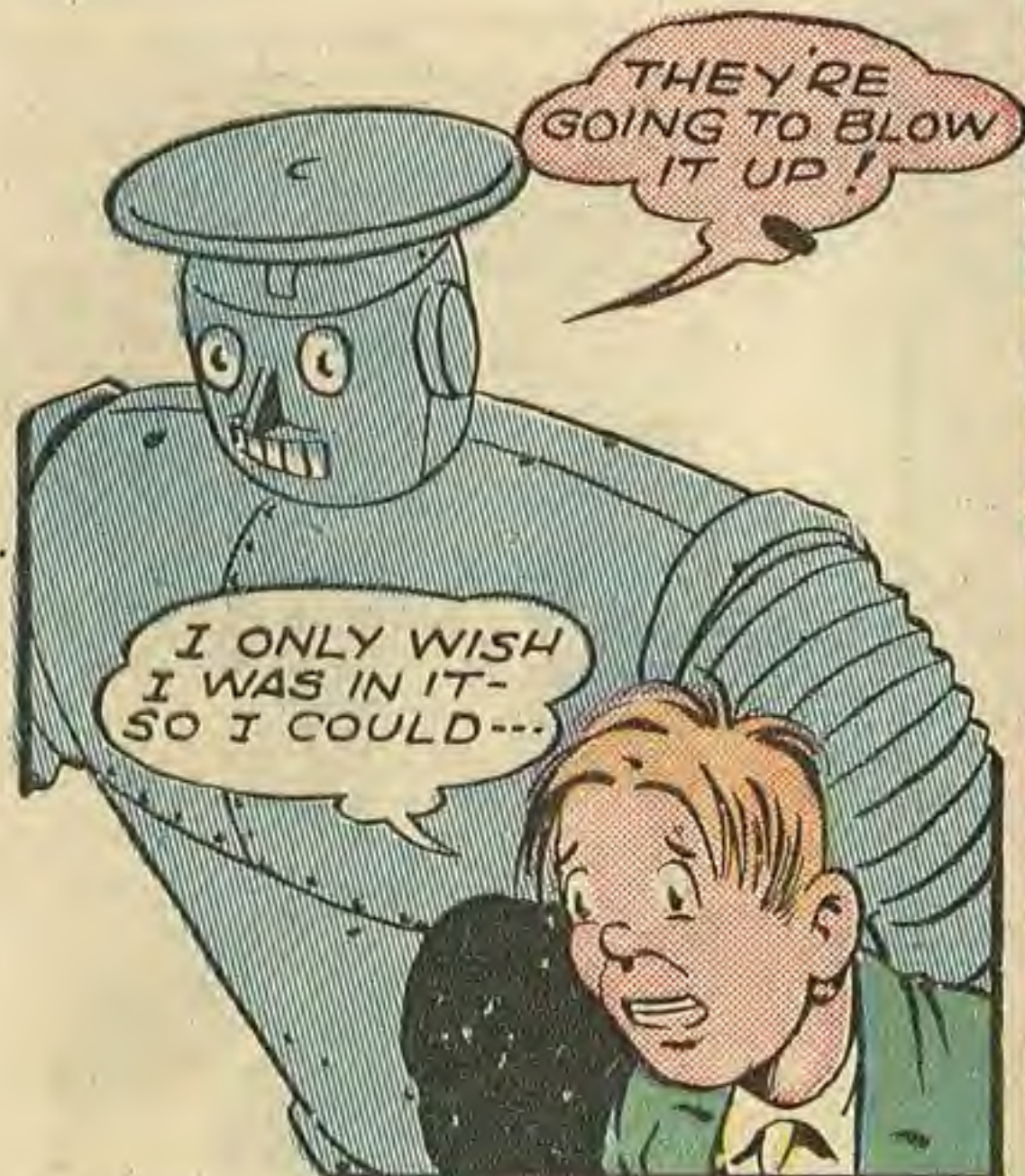
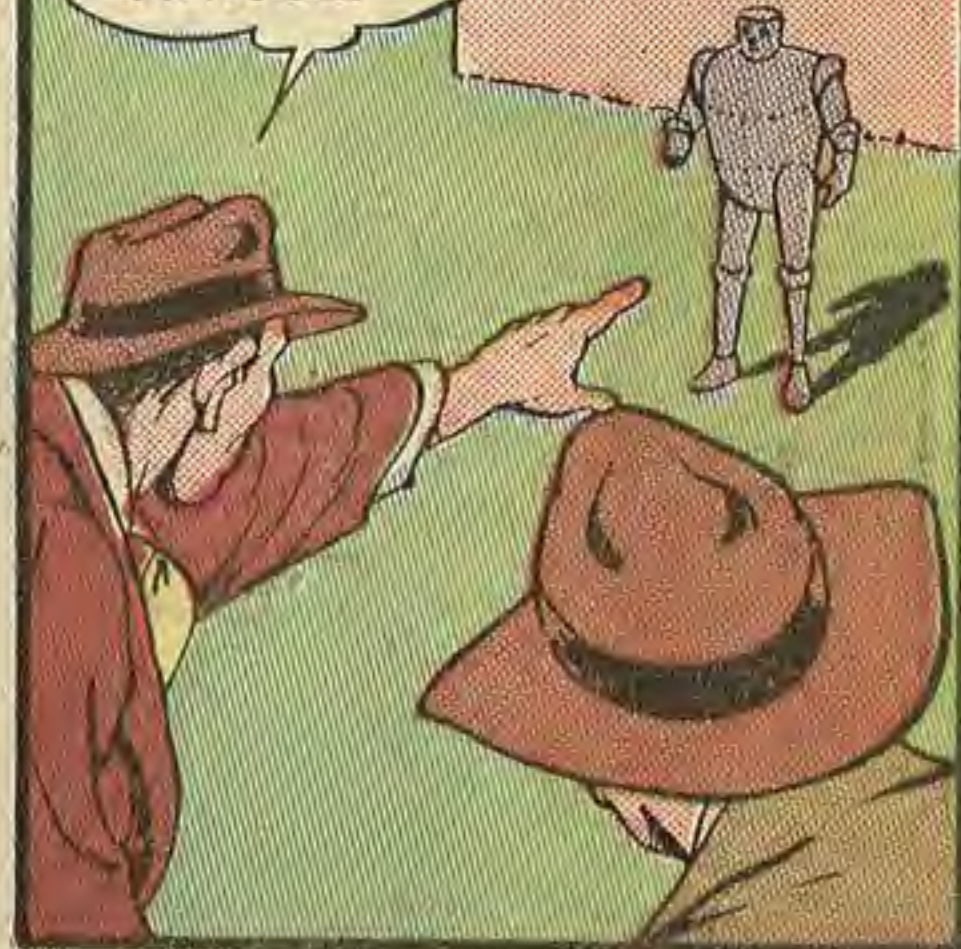
AND RIGHT BEHIND THEM--



THERE  
THEY  
ARE,  
TWIPPLE--

OH OH--  
THEY  
SEE MY  
IRON  
MAN--

LOOK! DOT  
IRON MAN, AGAIN--  
GIFF ME DER  
SMALL  
CHARGE--



THEY'RE  
GOING TO BLOW  
IT UP!

I ONLY WISH  
I WAS IN IT--  
SO I COULD--



GULP!  
IT-IT'S??  
GONE??

DO YOU STILL  
WISH YOU  
WERE IN,  
IT??- LET'S  
GO AFTER  
THEM--



WE DID A  
GOOD JOB,  
TWIPPLE!

YEAH, NOW  
I'LL GO HOME  
AND MAKE ME  
A NEW IRON  
SUIT--



DON'T WASTE YOUR  
TIME ON THAT.  
TWIPPLE-UNCLE  
SAM NEEDS  
TINSMITHS,  
BADLY- AND  
YOU'RE ONE  
OF THE BEST!

CHUCKS-I  
GUESS YER  
RIGHT!



**A**LTHOUGH CONQUERED EUROPE SHAKES TO THE TREAD OF NAZI LEGIONS THE SPIRIT OF THE BROKEN BUT UNBOWED PEASANTS IS KEPT ALIVE BY THE DARING FEATS OF A MYSTERIOUS ARCHER WHO STRIKES DOWN THE HUNS FROM WITHIN THEIR VERY RANKS. OPERATING SECRETLY FROM HIS ANCESTRAL CASTLE THIS MAN IS THE GESTAPO'S MIGHTIEST FOE...

# THE MARKSMAN

by FRED

HA! HA! HA! HA!  
SO YOU'RE THE GESTAPO'S  
MIGHTIEST FOE! WELL YOU  
AND YOUR UNDERGROUND  
PATRIOTS ARE GOING TO  
FEEL THE WRATH OF THE  
**CROSS BOW!**





SOMEWHERE IN CENTRAL EUROPE A PATRIOT WORKING AGAINST THE NAZIS IS SUDDENLY AND SILENTLY SHOT.



UGH! THEY GOT ME - I - I DIE FOR POLAND - AAAHHH!

THAT NIGHT FRIENDS OF THE DEAD MAN CARRY HIM AWAY.



POOR STANISLAUS! WE'VE LOST A GOOD MAN!

A NEW ENEMY IS ON OUR TRAIL... TAKE HIM TO OUR HEADQUARTERS!

LATER - IN THE HIDEOUT THEY ARE JOINED BY THE MAN THE NAZIS HATE.

THE MARKSMAN! TH- THEY SHOT STANISLAUS!

YES - I SAW YOU CARRY HIM - BUT I HEARD NO SHOT! HERE, I BRING YOU FOOD FROM MY CASTLE!

SO HE WAS KILLED BY A BOLT FROM A CROSS-BOW! I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE USING AN ANCIENT WEAPON!

SOONER OR LATER I'LL GET THAT KILLER AND FREE MY PEOPLE FROM HIM AND HIS KIND. I'LL GO NOW AND GET MY BOW!

BRAVELY SPOKEN! I'M WITH YOU!

AYE... ME TOO!



BUT HAD THEY LOOKED UP JUST THEN---

AND THE CROSS BOW IS NOT TO BE DEFIED!



HA / HA / HA / DEFY THE CROSS BOW, EH?? WE SHALL SEE!







I DEFY HIM...! OHH!

HA/HA/HA/HA/HA/

BUT THE GIRL SUCCEEDS IN ESCAPING FOR THE MOMENT...

SHE'S TOO PRETTY TO KILL...YET!



HA/HA/HA/NO ONE ESCAPES THE CROSS BOW!

I'M SHOT! (CULP) NO I'M NOT-B-BUT I'M CAUGHT!

FIRST I'LL SETTLE WITH YOUR HERO, THE MARKSMAN..AND I KNOW WHERE TO FIND HIM - THEN, I'LL ATTEND TO YOU!

NOT IF THE MARKSMAN GETS A SHOT AT YOU FIRST!



MEANWHILE IN HIS CASTLE THE MARKSMAN ADJUSTS HIS BOW AND ARROWS.

HAVE TO SHARPEN THESE SHAFTS.



HA/HA/HA/HA/ DON'T MOVE!



A TINY MIRROR IN THE BOOKCASE REVEALS THE TALL FORM OF THE CROSS BOW ABOUT TO RELEASE A DEADLY BOLT!





IN A FLASHING MOTION THE MARKSMAN WHIRLS AND FLINGS A THICK BOOK AT HIS WOULD-BE ASSASSIN...



DEFLECTING THE MISSILE OF DEATH



BEFORE THE CROSS BOW CAN RELOAD, A LONG UPPERCUT SNAPS HIS HEAD BACK..



ENOUGH! HA! HA! VERY NEAT! SO YOU CAN FIGHT WITH YOUR FISTS TOO!

JUST KEEP TALKING - WHAT'S THIS CROSS BOW GET UP??



THE CROSS BOW GET UP AS YOU CALL IT IS AN ANCIENT HERITAGE. MY FOREFATHERS BELONGED TO THE ORDER OF TEUTONIC KNIGHTS WHO CONQUERED EUROPE THEN AS NOW!



HA! FOOL! DO YOU THINK THE CROSS BOW SURRENDERS SO EASILY?!

THE FEUHRER IS BRINGING BACK THE GLORIES OF THE PAST AND IT IS MY DUTY TO SHOOT ALL WHO DISOBEY THE DICTUMS OF THE GESTAPO, ESPECIALLY YOU, MARKSMAN!

I SEE... YOU GERMANS ARE THE SAME BARBARIC SAVAGES AS YOU WERE SINCE THE DAWN OF HISTORY... COME, THIS WAY OUT!





OH... IT'S A FIGHT  
YOU WANT, EH??

HOW'D YOU GUESS?  
(ULP) I'M  
SLIPPING!

OH,  
I'M JUST  
SMART THAT  
WAY!

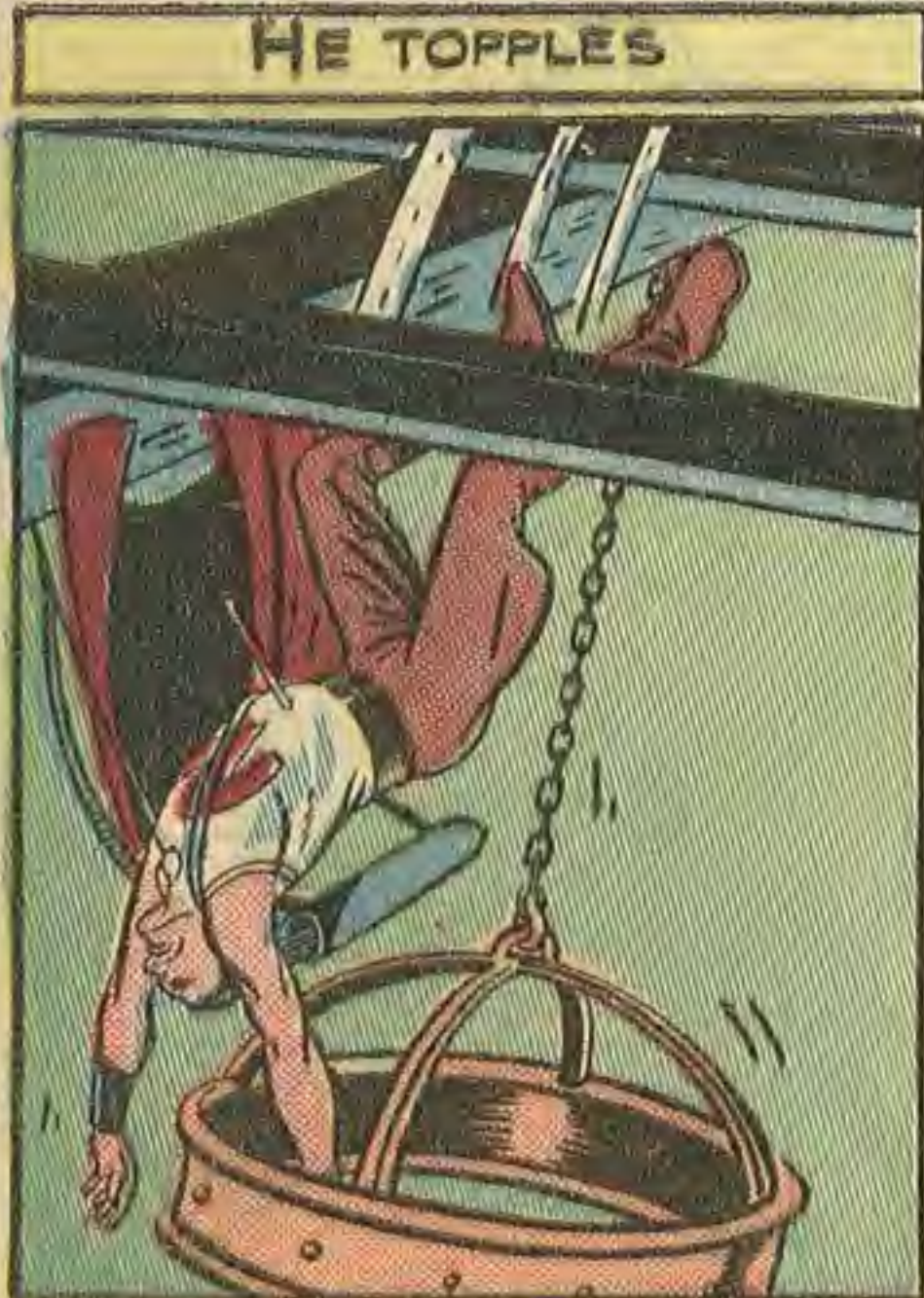
SUDDENLY THE MARKSMAN DOUBLES OVER  
AS A BOLT THUDS INTO HIS MID-SECTION!

WHY- THERE'S A REGULAR  
HIDEOUT DOWN HERE -AND  
IN MY OWN CASTLE! SO  
THAT'S HOW THE  
CROSS BOW-

-OOF!



HE TOPPLES



TOO BAD I HAD TO KILL HIM QUICKLY LIKE THAT. A LINGERING DEATH WOULD HAVE SUITED ME BETTER..OH, WELL I MUST DEPART AND SLAUGHTER A FEW MORE ENEMIES OF HITLER, AND..AH.. THAT GIRL!



WHAT GIRL?

YOU AGAIN! ARE Y-YOU A GHOST?



NO/BUT YOU'RE GOING TO BE!



I'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THAT!

SEIZING THE ADVANTAGE THE CROSS BOW TAKES AIM...



I'VE GOT YOU TRAPPED, MARKSMAN! HA/HA/ YOU KNOW, I'M ENJOYING THIS!





BOLT AFTER BOLT IS SHOT INTO THE MARKSMAN!

BUT THE MARKSMAN REFUSES TO FALL!

HA.. HA/ CRY OUT/ DO YOU NOT FEEL THE STING OF MY BOLTS!

I HAVE A PROTECTOR ON- AND NOW IT'S MY TURN! THIS IS AIMED RIGHT AT YOUR HEART- IF YOU HAVE A HEART!

HA/ HA/ I FOOLED YOU! I HAVE A CORK PROTECTOR, TOO!

THE MARKSMAN RUSHES IN FOR A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

DROP THAT CROSS-BOW!

NOW!

- GOT HIM!

AUGH!

PHEW! THAT CROSS BOW WAS A TOUGH CUSTOMER! I'LL TIE HIM UP IN THE DUNGEON!

LATER.

OH! I WAS AFRAID THAT AWFUL CROSS BOW WOULD SHOOT YOU!

WHO? HIM? HE WAS NO TROUBLE... MUCH! AND AS OUR ANCESTORS RID THE COUNTRY OF THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS SO WILL WE DRIVE OUT THEIR NAZI DESCENDANTS!



A DESTROYER IS LAUNCHED. FOR A MOMENT IT RIDES PROUDLY.....THEN QUIETLY SINKS FROM SIGHT BENEATH THE WAVES. WATCH THE MIGHTY RAY - ALIAS "HAPPY" TERRILL, NEWSHAWK... SMASH THE DASTARDLY PLOT THAT THREATENS AMERICA'S SEA SUPREMACY!!







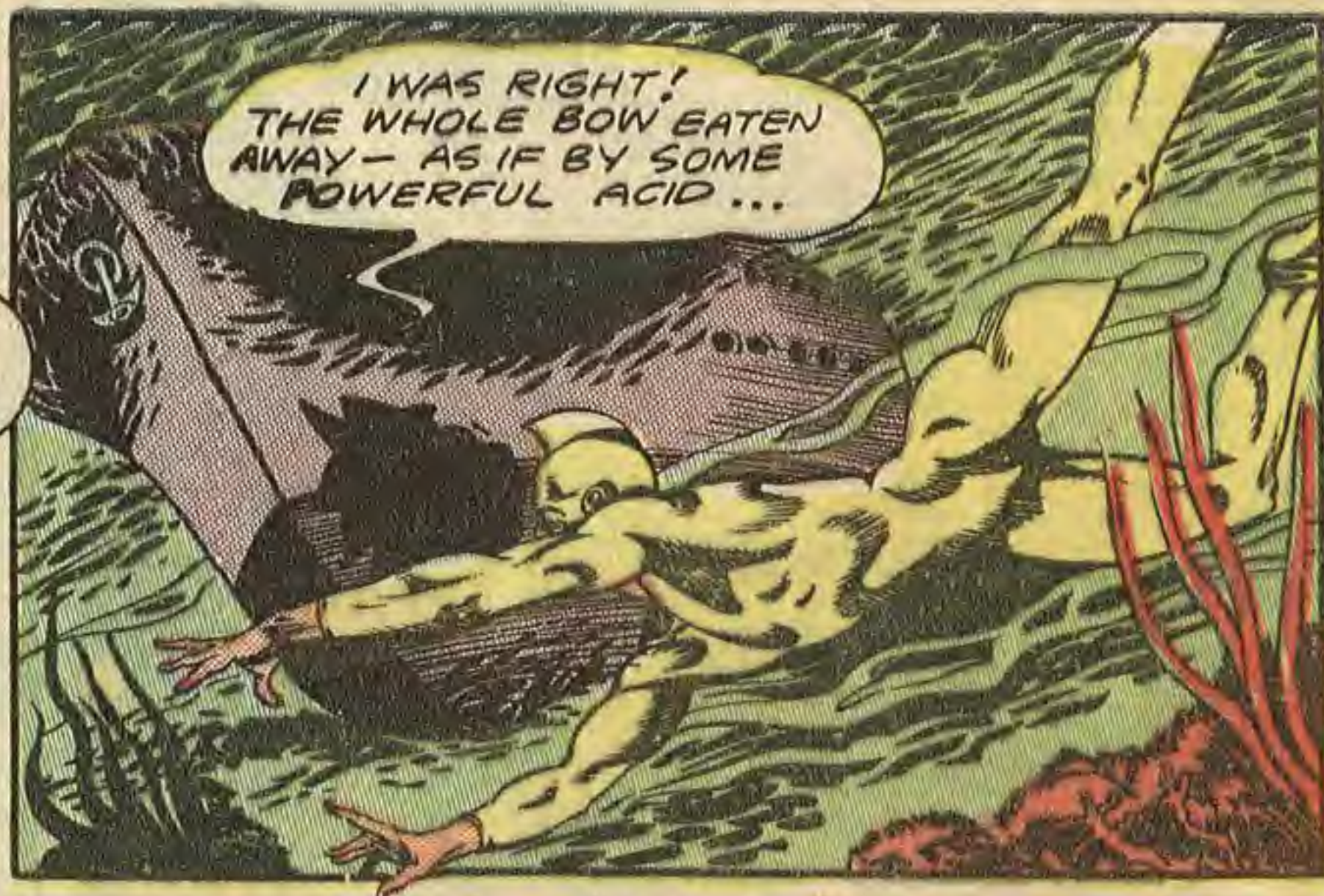








... AND THE PLACE TO START INVESTIGATING IS DOWN HERE !!



I WAS RIGHT! THE WHOLE BOW EATEN AWAY - AS IF BY SOME POWERFUL ACID ...

IT MUST HAVE BEEN IN THAT CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE AND SPATTERED OVER ONTO BUD'S COAT! I'VE GOT TO SEE MRS. BOLTON AT ONCE !!



THERE'S MRS. BOLTON'S CAR, NOW-- AND IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S IN SOME KIND OF TROUBLE!



JENKS, WHAT IS IT?

THOSE SAME THUGS PICKED A FIGHT BEFORE! I'LL TEND TO THEM, MA'AM...

JENKS, PLEASE GET ME AWAY FROM HERE!



JENKS IS GOING TO BE BUSY HUNTIN' FOR HIS TEETH, LADY!

UNNOTICED IN THE EXCITEMENT, DEFT HANDS MAKE A SINISTER SUBSTITUTION!



HOLD HIM! I'LL GIVE HIM DE COOP DE GRACE, AS DA BOOKS SAY!







THE BOOKS ALSO SAY LIFE IS GIVE-AND-TAKE --- AND IT'S YOUR TURN TO TAKE !!!

HEY, QUIT THE... EEEOW! THE RAY!!



A JOLLY LITTLE GET-TOGETHER EH, BOYS??



THE VERY THOUGHT I HAD, MOON-BEAM!! GRAB HIM, YOU OAFS!



CAN'T I KNOCK HIM OFF, BOSS? I OWE HIM SUP'N FER SLUGGIN' ME!!

THAT'S TOO EASY! HE AND THAT BRAT NEED BATHS-ACID BATHS!



UH! WHAT HIT ME?? OH... BUD! YOU TOO?? DON'T LET ON YOU KNOW ME...

I WON'T, GOSH, THEY SNATCHED ME OUTA THE PHONE BOOTH!



AWAKE, RAY? GOOD! ONE SHOULD ALWAYS BE AWAKE AT HIS FUNERAL, NO?

I'LL BE AWAKE AT YOURS, NEVER FEAR!



SO-O-O?? MRS. BOLTON IS ON HER WAY TO CHRISTEN ANOTHER SHIP RIGHT NOW-- WITH A BOTTLE OF ACID WE SLIPPED HER DURING THE SCRAP!!

SO THAT'S WHAT BURNED MY SUIT...



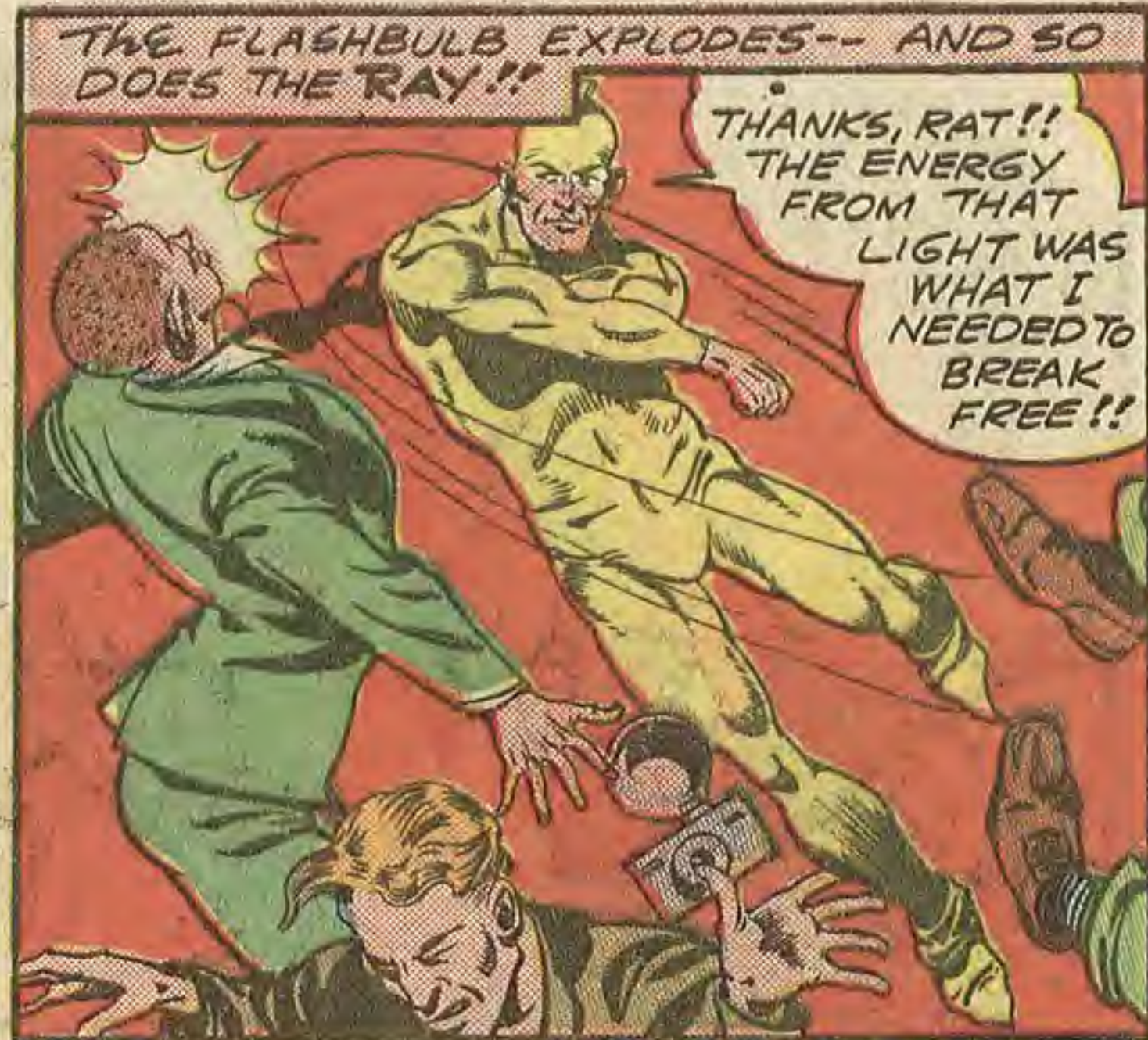
A SUPER-ACID THAT MELTS STEEL LIKE BUTTER!! BUT WHY TELL YOU WHEN I CAN DEMONSTRATE MORE FORCIBLY??

CAN'T YOU GET LOOSE?

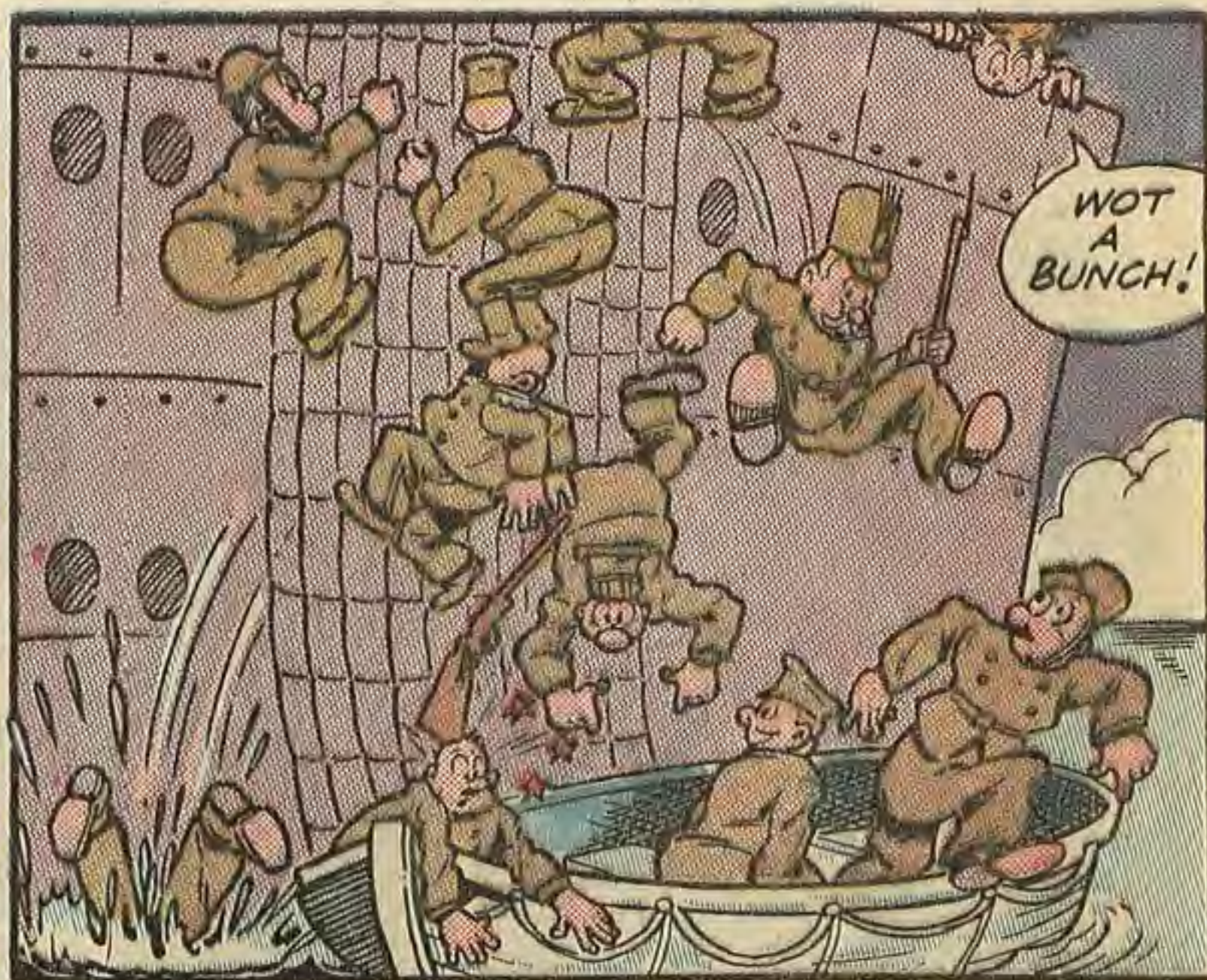


WAIT! I HAVE AN IDEA! OTTO MY CAMERA AND LIGHTS! I'LL SEND A PICTURE OF THIS TO DER FUEHRER! HE WILL LOVE IT!











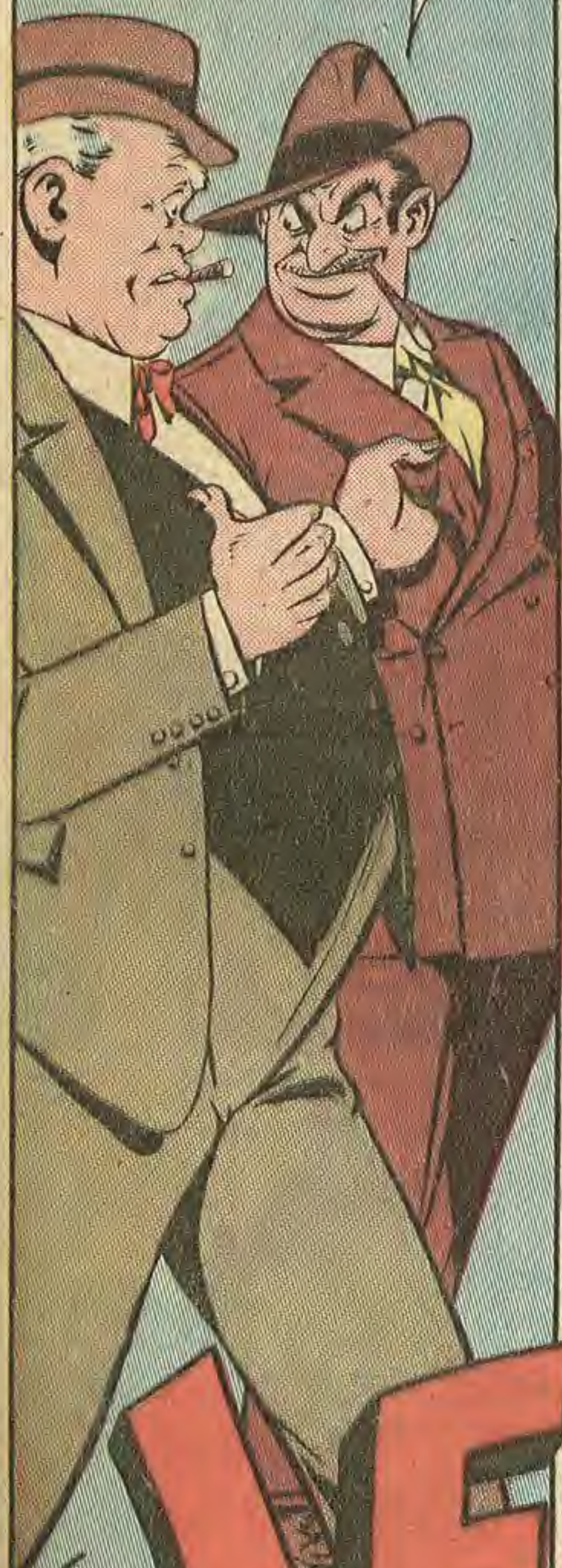
COME ON, GURGLES! I'VE GOT THE GOODS ON YOU! - AN' I'M RUNNING YOU IN! YOUR "HODDLUMS, INC." IS FINISHED!

OKAY, McGINTY! OKAY! YOU'RE A NICE GUY! I'LL GO TO JAIL WITH YOU - ANY TIME!

I'VE GOT TH' JITTERS, CHUCK! THAT GREASE-BALL, GURGLES, WAS TOO WILLING TO GO TO JAIL! WHEN I LEFT, HE HAD THE NERVE TO SAY, "I'LL BE SEEING YOU!"

DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU DO! - I WOULDN'T PUT ANYTHING PAST HIM!

TAKE IT FROM ME - McGINTY'S GOT PLENTY TO WORRY ABOUT! THE SET-UP'S PHONEY! - WITH A CAPITAL "P"!

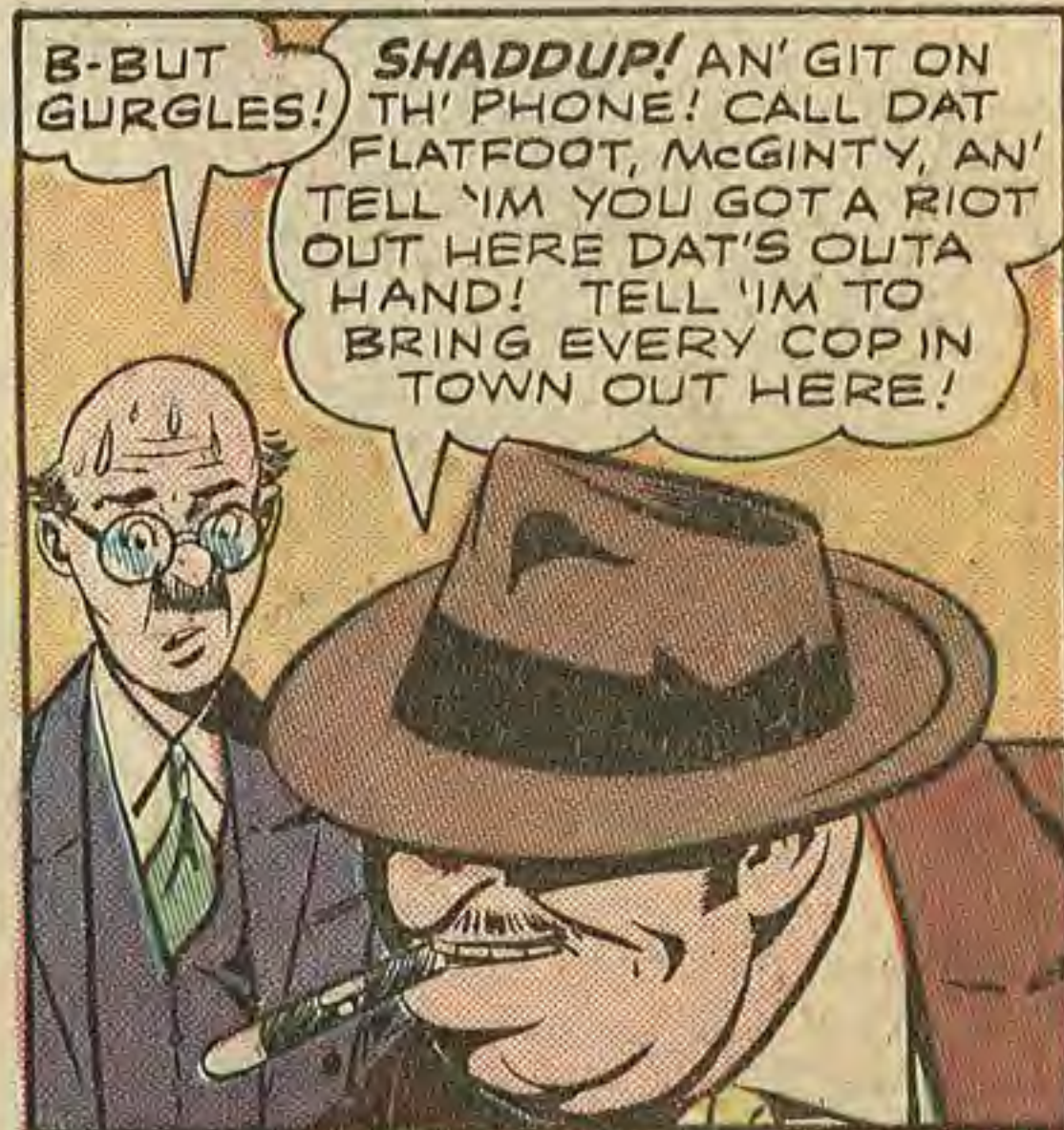


The JESTER



# PHONEY

--- ISN'T THE **WORD** FOR IT!  
WOULD YOU THINK GURGLES IS IN JAIL?





# LAUGH,

# GURGLES!

YOU, TOO, MCGINTY...!  
BECAUSE NEITHER OF YOU WILL  
LAUGH BEFORE LONG!



BUT -- A TELEPHONE-RING WIPES THE GRIN OFF MCGINTY'S CHIN...





**BRILLIANT, MCGINTY!**

BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHY! .....  
AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED,  
CHUCK LANE IS THE DUMBEST  
COP ON THE FORCE!





# JERK?

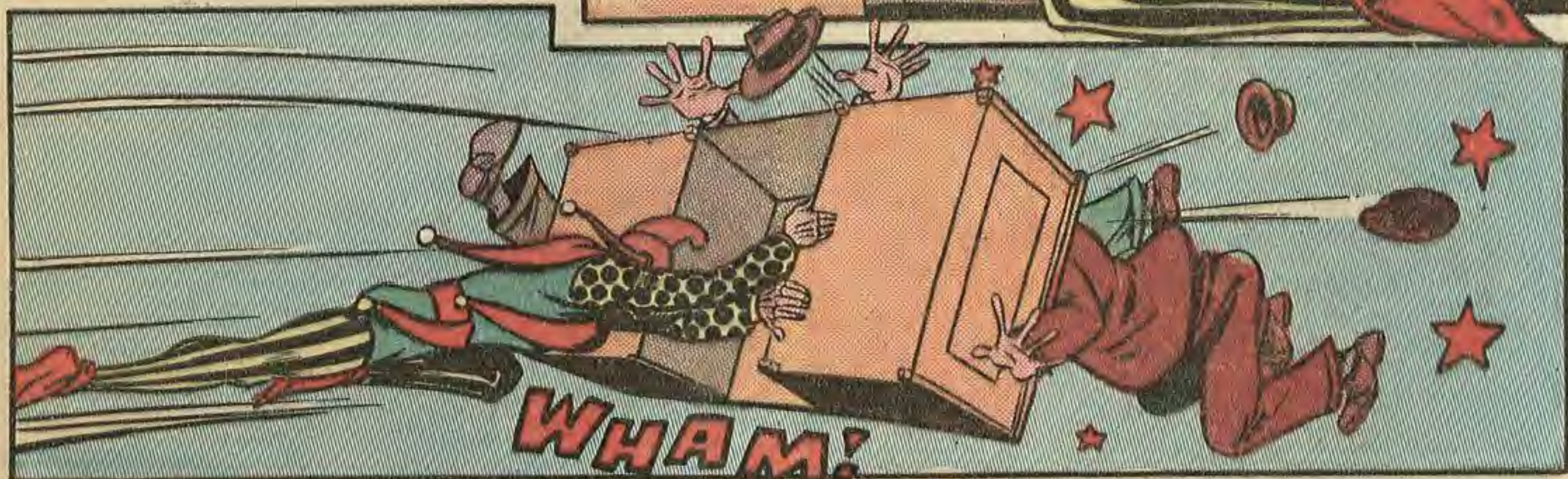
... THAT'S WHAT **YOU** THINK, GURGLES!  
WAIT'LL YOU GO TO YANK HIM  
FROM BEHIND THE DESK!



GURGLES  
WOULDN'T BE  
AFRAID OF  
A COP! ---  
BUT.....



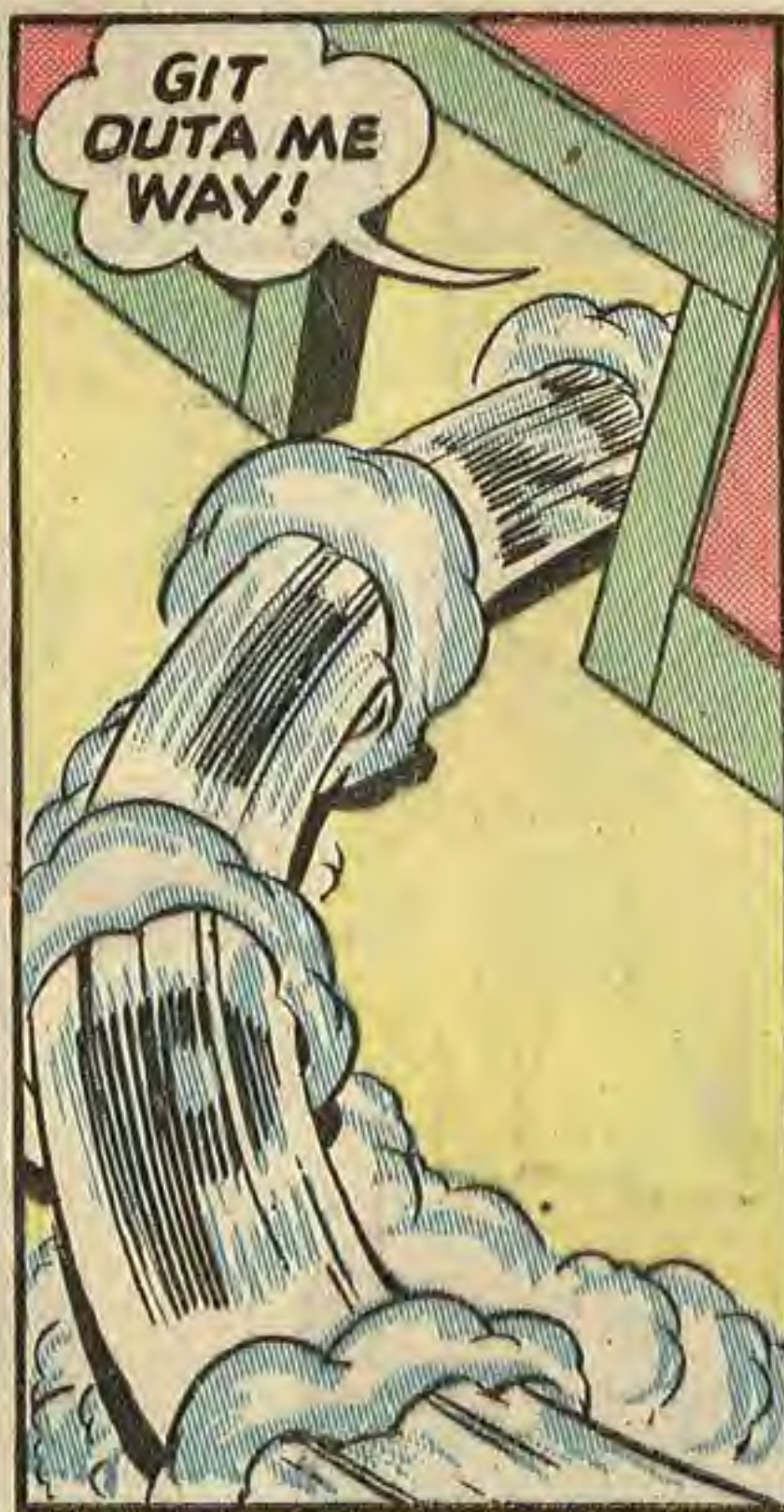
HERE  
THEY  
COME!



**WHAM!**



**THE  
JESTER!**



**GIT  
OUTA ME  
WAY!**



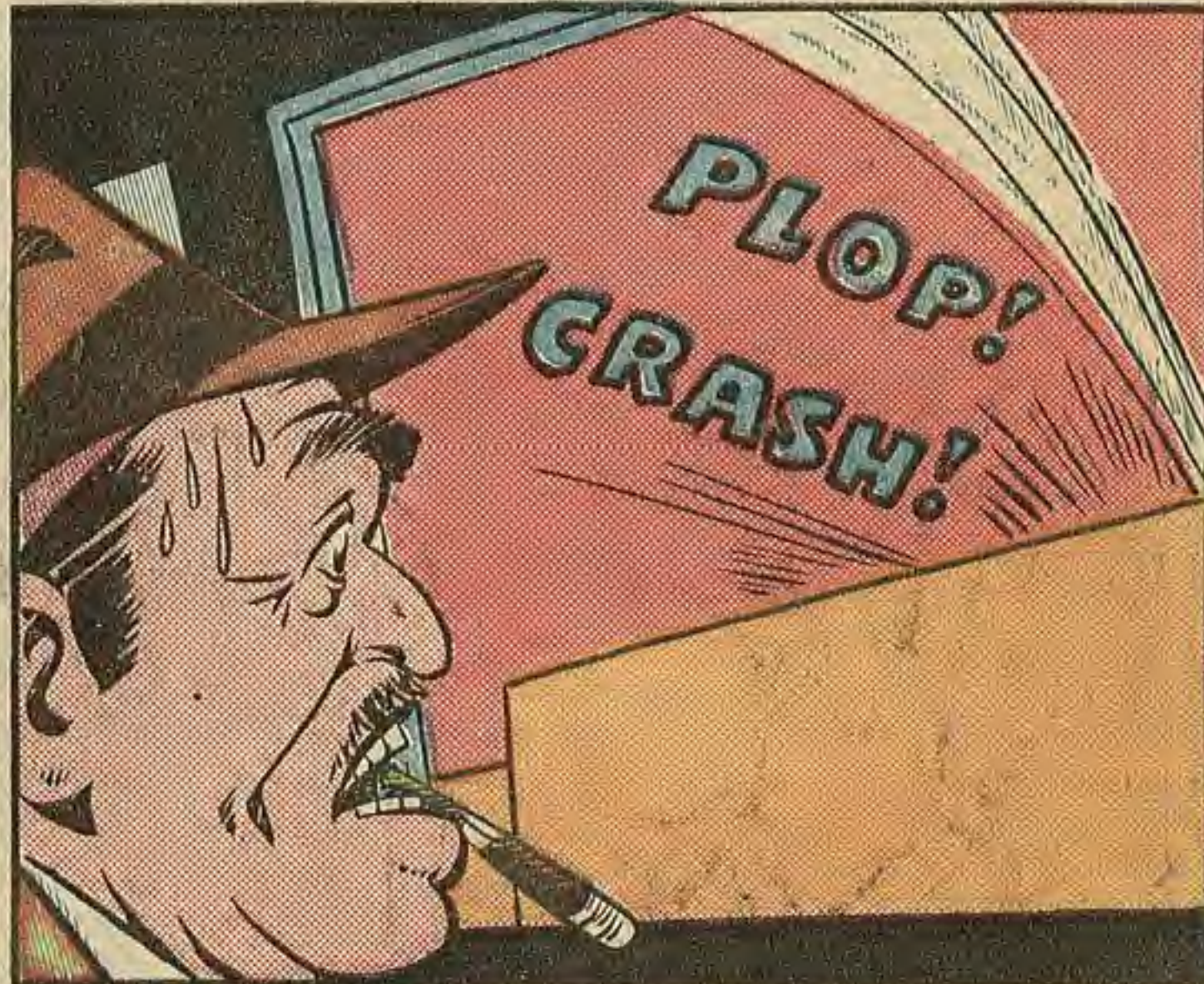
THINK HE  
RECOGNIZED  
US,  
GURGLES?

WHAT'S TH'  
DIFFERENCE?  
ONCE WE'RE  
IN THE  
"BIG HOUSE"  
AGAIN, HE  
CAN'T PROVE  
WE WAS  
OUT!



# YEAH?

GURGLES! - YOU OUGHT TO READ  
THE REST OF THIS STORY!





# OH-OH!

GURGLES WILL BE SEEING  
McGINTY AGAIN!





# ROOKIE

# RANKIN

*and*

# MASTER CRIMINAL MARAK

YOU HAVE ALL  
READ OF MASTER  
MINDS, OF CURIOUS  
TWISTED CRIMINAL  
GENIUS' WHOSE  
EXISTENCE WAS  
A THREAT TO  
SOCIETY. MARAK  
WAS ONE OF  
THESE AND LIKE  
ALL, WHO WOULD  
FLAUNT THE LAW,  
MARAK FOUND  
THAT THE END  
IS ALWAYS THE  
SAME!!







THIS IS MARAK... DOWN ON HIS LUCK... HOPELESS... DEFEATED...

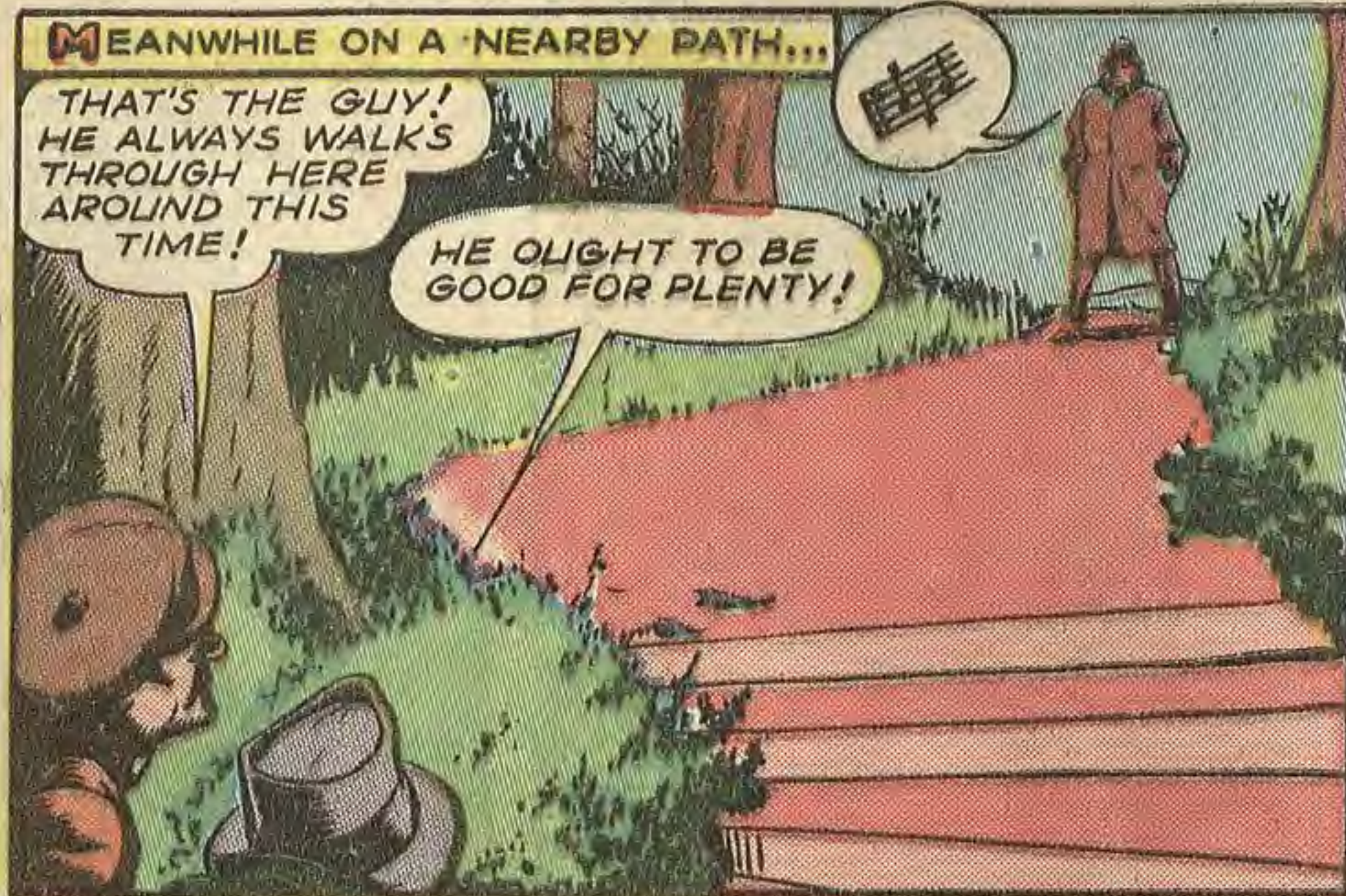
SO.... THIS IS THE GOOD LUCK I WAS TOLD I WOULD FIND IN AMERICA.. HA!



BAH!-- I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN PARIS! I SHOULD HAVE TRIED MY LUCK WITH THE SURETE! THEY NEVER WOULD HAVE CAUGHT ME FOR THAT MURDER!



THERE IS NO CRIME HERE... WORTHY OF MY GENIUS! AND I WILL STARVE BEFORE I BECOME A PETTY CROOK LIKE THE OTHERS! HA!-- THOSE FOOLS! NO WONDER THE JAILS ARE BULGING WITH THEIR KIND!



MEANWHILE ON A NEARBY PATH...

THAT'S THE GUY! HE ALWAYS WALKS THROUGH HERE AROUND THIS TIME!

HE OUGHT TO BE GOOD FOR PLENTY!



DON'T MOVE-- OR YOU'LL GET IT!

WHAT!



YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!

HOLD HIM-- WHILE I SLUG HIM!



ANOTHER TWO-BIT ROBBERY!-- HA! BUT STILL A MAN MUST EAT!

HELP! OH!



MARAK TAKES A HAND IN THE FIGHTING... USING THE FOUL TACTICS HE LEARNED AMONG THE PARIS APACHE...

YOU DO NOT FEEL LIKE FIGHTING NOW, EH?

I CANNOT MAKE UP MY MIND WHETHER TO BREAK YOUR ARM --- OR YOUR NECK!



SO I WILL SETTLE FOR ALL YOUR TEETH!

MY WALLET! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY WALLET!



HERE IS YOUR WALLET--I COULD NOT HELP SEEING THE NOTE FOR FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS ---AND YOUR LETTER SAYING YOU COULD NOT PAY! THAT IS TOO BAD, MR. ELIAS GREEN!

SUCH IMPERTINENCE!

YOU HAVE WHAT I LACK-- REPUTATION, ENOUGH CREDIT, SOCIAL STANDING... WE SHALL BE PARTNERS, MR. GREEN! I CAN SAVE YOU! AND NO ONE ELSE CAN!

YOU-- YOU MUST BE MAD!

NO, I'M MERELY PENNILESS! BUT IN ONE YEAR... WITH YOUR HELP... I SHALL BE A MILLIONAIRE! IN ONE YEAR! --- WAIT AND SEE!





AND SO A YEAR PASSES...TWELVE MONTHS FOR MARAK TO MAKE HIS STRANGE PROPHECY COME TRUE...



LET US LOOK IN ON MARAK NOW AND SEE WHAT HAS BECOME OF HIM...

HELLO, DOLLY...WHAT'VE YOU GOT THERE?

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF CONSOLIDATED MOTORS!



THIS IS MARAK ONE YEAR LATER...

HERE IS THE MESSAGE YOU WERE WAITING FOR MR. MARAK!

ABOUT TIME THE OLD FOOL CAME THROUGH, ---HA!



YOU'RE GOING TOO FAR, MARAK!--- I FOUND OUT TODAY THAT YOU HAD OLD MAN GRAHAM **MURDERED** SO THAT HIS STOCKS WOULD DROP IN THE MARKET!

AND WE MADE A FORTUNE, SELLING SHORT...**HMMM!** LOOKS LIKE THE PRESIDENT OF CONSOLIDATED IS GOING TO BE STUBBORN TOO!



PERHAPS I HAD BETTER PERSUADE HIM MYSELF!

I WON'T STAND FOR IT! I'LL GO TO THE POLICE!



I'LL TELL THEM EVERYTHING! I CAN'T HAVE THIS ON MY CONSCIENCE ANY LONGER!--- I'LL GO MAD!!



NO! I DON'T THINK YOU WILL LIVE TO GO MAD, ELIAS GREEN!











GET SMART, COPPER!-- YOU'RE ON THE LOSING SIDE!-- YOU CAN'T WIN AGAINST MARAK!

I TAKE A LOT OF CONVINCIN' MISTER! AND I AIN'T CONVINCED BY A LONG SHOT! YOU'LL HEAR FROM ME AGAIN!



PHEFFF! SO LONG, SUCKER--- LOOK ME UP WHEN YOU'RE SOMEBODY! I CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH SMALL FRY!



SO I'M A SLUCKER!-- O-KAY!-- BUT I'M GONNA STICK CLOSER TO THAT GUY THAN A COAT OF PAINT! HE'S BOUND TO MAKE A SLIP SOMETIME!

LATER, MARAK ENTERS A SWANKY APARTMENT BUILDING.



NO ONE'S FOLLOWING ME! GOOD! THIS IS ONE JOB I WANT TO DO ALONE!

BUT SOMEONE IS FOLLOWING MARAK... ROOKIE RANKIN!



I'M GONNA GET THAT GUY IF I HAVE TO FOLLOW HIM TWICE AROUND THE WORLD!

MARAK RINGS THE BUZZER AT AN APARTMENT DOOR....



YOU!

HELLO, JONATHAN! SURPRISED TO SEE ME?



BY THIS TIME YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN SAFE IN MEXICO WITH A MILLION DOLLARS IN STOLEN BONDS-- AND I WOULD HAVE MADE MANY MILLIONS FROM THE PANIC STRICKEN INVESTORS WHO SOLD THEIR STOCK! BUT YOU WENT BACK ON OUR AGREEMENT!

I-I COULDN'T GO THROUGH WITH IT! I COULDN'T!











# BLACK BOUCHARD

**T**HE legend is an amazing one.

It goes back to the year 1743, when the seas were overrun by all sorts of cutthroat pirates. Perhaps the most rascally one of these was Black Bouchard, the renegade Frenchman; and next in line is undoubtedly his crew—scum picked up in the worst ports of the world. Men wanted by the law. Men whose necks ever felt the taut bind of hemp.

Black Bouchard! A name to be conjured with. A name that brought fear and terror to the hearts of the dwellers along all coasts in that period. Black Bouchard, who thought nothing of slitting a dozen throats for a few pieces of eight.

\* \* \*

The legend has it that one night in the year of 1743, Bouchard sailed into Rio de Janerio, boarded a ship loaded with defenseless colonists from the Netherlands, and calmly killed every last one of them. What for? He thirsted for blood. His crew craved excitement. There was nothing of value on board the ship. Nothing except the few possessions and agricultural implements which the colonists expected to till the soil with when they had reached their destination, far up the Amazon.

This was by far the worst deed ever committed by Bouchard, although all of them are not chronicled by any means. All Rio was up in arms. Eventually the whole world learned of Bouchard's black murder of a hundred souls, and every nation hunted the sea raider.

But the French buchaner was a slick one. He hid out in a far-off bay on some remote island until things cooled down. Then again he sailed the seas, scuttling ships and murdering. But Bouchard met his end one night in the latter part of 1743. He had

just sailed into Port-au-Spain and had released his anchor, when an English man-o'-war, lying in wait in the darkness, raced out and nabbed him. Bouchard and all his crew died on the gallows.

But while this ended the evil-doings of the pirate, he didn't die from the memory of men. Nor did his "ghost" die. Ah, no! Soon after his death, sailors came into ports swearing that they'd seen Bouchard's ship (it had been burned to the water's edge by the English) under full sail, and that Bouchard and his crew were very much alive on deck.

Some pooh-poohed these tales; there were others, however, old sailing men, who put considerable stock in the strange tales. Hadn't they seen such ships themselves? Captain Kidd himself, and the redoubtable La Fitte were known to roam the seas in ghostly ships; and there was the famous "Flying Dutchman." No. It was possible—aye, very probable—that Bouchard and his crew sailed on moonlit nights. . . .

\* \* \*

The Papoose, a fast cruiser owned by Jimmy Christian, sped along through quiet seas. It was the night of September, 21, 1942. Jimmy was on a mission for the United States government, and everything was strictly secrecy. On board were the regular crew, a government official, and myself. I was there to do some reporting on the events that were expected to take place. We were in the Atlantic, somewhere near the Sargasso Sea. It was nine o'clock in the evening.

I'll never forget the shock of seeing that shining cigar-shaped hull rise above the water, and the conning tower lid fly open. In a moment half a dozen sailors were swarming on deck to man the gun. The commander of the sub shouted through the megaphone

for us to stand by or be shelled.

"Go ahead and shell, you Fritz!" Jimmy yelled back. And at the same time our crew were limbering up the heavy deck gun mounted on the foredeck. Just before the sub's gun spoke, our own roared. The next moment half of the sub's conning tower was missing. The big undersea boat listed immediately and slowly submerged. What became of the men I don't know. It was moonlight, but things were pretty dim. I believe they got back into their craft. But whether they sank for good we'll never know.

\* \* \*

We spent the rest of the night discussing our narrow shave, naturally, and with morning I was so sleepy that I tumbled into my bunk without breakfast. The next day was uneventful and we sailed slowly, waiting for the appearance of the convoy which we were to contact five days out from New York. This convoy was taking a very roundabout way to England, in the hope that it would escape the menace of the subs.

Evening came and we sat on the deck enjoying the fresh breeze that had sprung up with the sun's setting. It had been infernally hot all day and at this time of year in this region of the Atlantic the atmosphere is extremely humid. I was almost suffocated and we were drinking cold lemonade when it happened. I saw the wake it left first and I yelled, dropping my glass of ade on the deck.

"Torpedo!" I shrieked. "There it comes, heading right for us!"

\* \* \*

It was only the presence of mind of Jimmy that we escaped that steel death. Then it barely cleared our bow as Jimmy swung the ship about with a deft twist of the wheel.



"Close squeek," murmured Jimmy as if nothing untoward had happened. I was fairly green with fright. I had encountered torpedoes before, but never this close. I had been in the war zone in Europe on two occasions and had chalked up some exciting adventures on various front lines. But that torpedo gave me the biggest start of my life thus far.

\* \* \*

The men were at battle stations and everything was in readiness to give Fritz a flock of trouble, but for some strange reason the sub didn't show.

"Maybe it was the same one that tried to get us yesterday," one of the men hazarded.

"I doubt it," said Jimmy. "I think that baby made Davy Jones Locker."

We sighted the convoy the next day at dawn and quickly made our report to the commanding officer of the fleet. He was visibly worried when we mentioned the run-in with two subs.

"Seems there's not a hole in the ocean where those rats aren't thick," he said. "Well, we'll have to chance it. We're plenty well armed, you know."

\* \* \*

We tailed that convoy all the day, and not a sub showed. A convoy of Lockheed planes roared over us about five in the afternoon, from seaward, and our Sparks picked up a message from their leader to the effect that the ship convoy had thus far encountered no trouble from undersea craft.

"Maybe it's because we're so close to the Sargasso Sea," Jimmy said later in the evening when we were talking about the lucky break for the convoy.

"But why?" asked the skipper. "What about the Sargasso Sea?"

Jimmy grinned knowingly. "Haven't you heard?" he asked. "All the shipping lanes are talking about the presence of Black Bouchard, the pirate of the sixteenth century."

"What about Bouchard?" I asked. I had heard of the rat.

"He's sailing the seas again, according to certain seamen."

I laughed. "What tripe! The old guy was hanged two hundred years ago, along with his crew, and his ship burned by the British."

"I know." Jimmy looked solemn. "Did you ever hear of the 'Flying Dutchman'?"

Of course we had all heard of the phantom ship supposed to haunt certain regions of the Atlantic.

"Something similar, I suppose," Jimmy said. "Only Bouchard hasn't been reported seen in many a year."

\* \* \*

We let the thing rest there and soon afterward turned in. We got a radio early next morning to sail close to the Sargasso Sea and be on the lookout for a German raider reported seen in that area by our flyers. We were up with the dawn, which was slightly overcast.

Black Bouchard! Several times during the night I had awakened and thought of the evil genius who had participated in wholesale murder of innocent people. I wondered how long a man such as him would last these days. Not long, surely.

We made the edge of the famed Sargasso about noon. We were to cruise slowly, keeping an eye out for the raider and report its position soon as we saw it, if we did. We didn't spot the German.

\* \* \*

Toward evening it grew chilly. A faint fog was in evidence, and the sun had gone down in a saffron pall of weird light. The thick weed and debris of this area creates a poisonous gas which fills the air for many miles out at sea. I began to feel drowsy. Jimmy, the skipper, and Leighton, the government man, were sitting in our usual place on the fore'd deck. It was about ten o'clock and a pale moon swam

through the murky yellowish clouds.

Suddenly Jimmy said, "Look! There it is—Bouchard's ship!"

\* \* \*

I craned my neck and stared into the semidarkness. There, sure enough, was a four-master under full sail, billowing toward us. It came on, veering off our star'd and heading to sea. Standing on the forepeak, cutlass in his hand, and a dirty bandana about his head, was Black Bouchard! His crew was busy at the sails. There seemed to be a strong wind, but I could not feel it.

Suddenly Bouchard gave a command. Five guns belched red flame from the side of the pirate ship and I heard the grape screaming overhead.

"Quick!" I yelled. "Start firing. They'll sink us!"

Someone shook me. I tore my eyes open. Jimmy Christian stood beside me and a grin touched his features.

"You see it?" he asked. "Quite a ship, eh?"

I came to myself. "What do you mean, quite a ship? I guess I was dreaming—"

Jimmy said, "maybe I was too. But I'll tell you what I saw." He told me the exact thing that I had seen. Had it been a dream then? Or—

\* \* \*

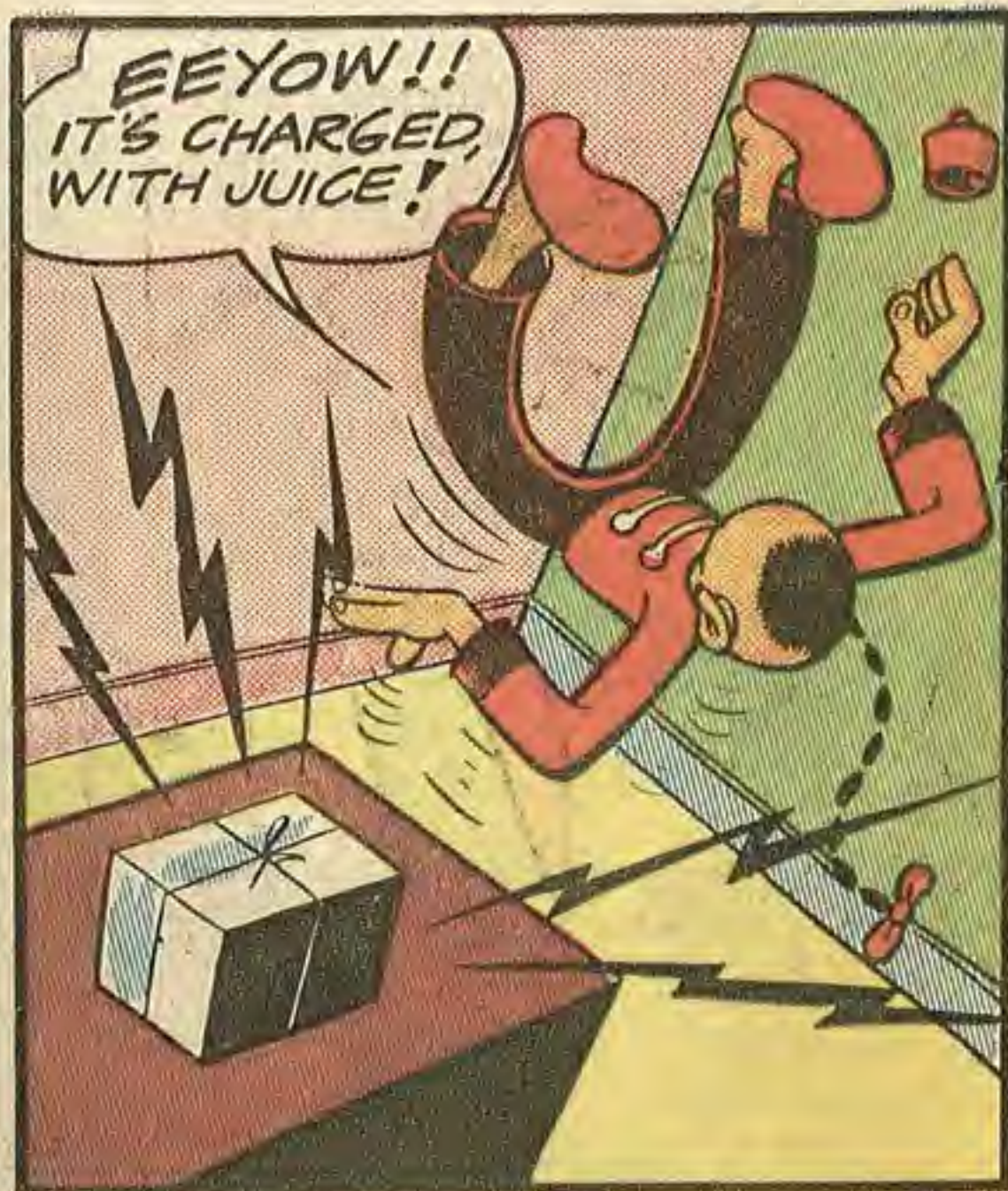
The skipper was not on deck. "You mean we both had the same dream?" I asked in amazement. "But that's rather a strange—"

"Coincidence?" supplied Jimmy. "It is. And then again, there are others who claim to have had the same dream—if it is a dream. One thing sure, in this region the gases provoke some uncanny dreams. But isn't it funny that everybody has exactly the same dream: of Bouchard firing a broadside at them?"

\* \* \*

It was funny. And to this day I don't know for certain whether we had a dream or the ghost of long-dead Bouchard actually sailed across our vision. . . .







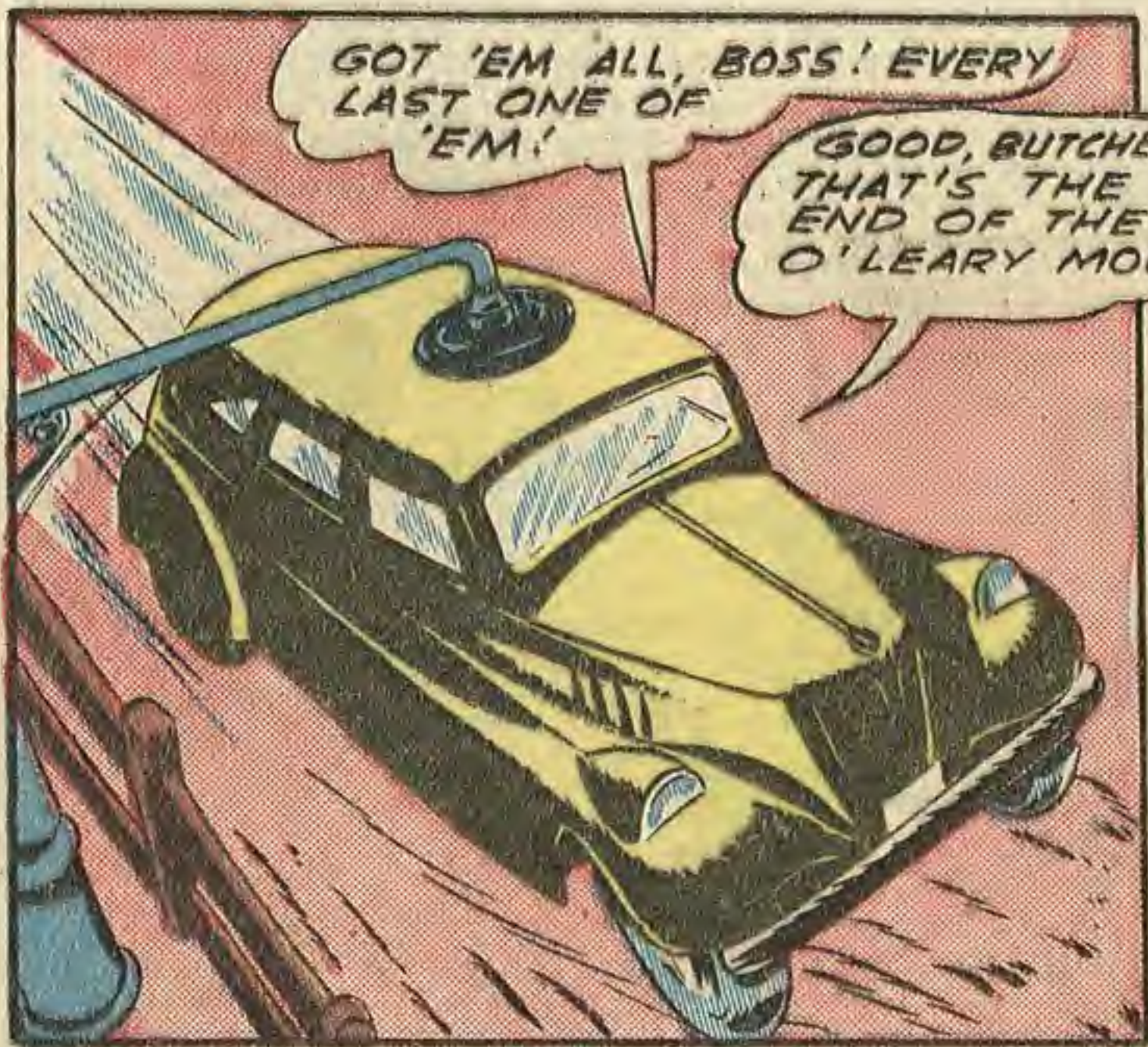
THE ROARING 20'S HAVE LONG PASSED AND WITH THEM WENT THE THUNDEROUS ERA OF GANG WARS, BLOOD FEUDS, WHISKEY CZARS AND A VICIOUS LEADER KNOWN AS THE CROW --- BUT WITH NATION WIDE RATIONING EFFECT, ONCE MORE THUGS FIND A FEW PALTRY DOLLARS IN CHEATING AND ROBBING-- AND ONCE MORE THE CROW COMES BACK TO REIGN OVER HIS BROOD OF HOODLUMS!

THE QUIET STREETS ARE SUDDENLY FILLED WITH THE DEADLY RATTLE OF GUNS!

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THE QUIET STREETS ARE SUDDENLY FILLED WITH THE DEADLY RATTLE OF GUNS!





GOT 'EM ALL, BOSS! EVERY LAST ONE OF 'EM!

GOOD, BUTCHER. THAT'S THE END OF THE O'LEARY MOB!



I WARNED THEM-- BUT THEY WOULDN'T LISTEN TO THE CROW! I TOLD O'LEARY TO KEEP HIS GANG AWAY FROM THE EAST SIDE GASOLINE SET-UP..



OH-OH-

HURRY UP, MIKE -- THERE'S BEEN A SHOOTIN'!



WELL, O'LEARY, LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT ALIVE. WHO DID IT?

THE CROW! HE CAME BY IN A CAR AND LET US HAVE IT!



THE CROW? BUT-- BUT HE'S IN LEAVENWORTH!

YOU'RE NUTS -- HE ESCAPED LAST MONTH. F.B.I.'S BEEN ON HIS TRAIL.



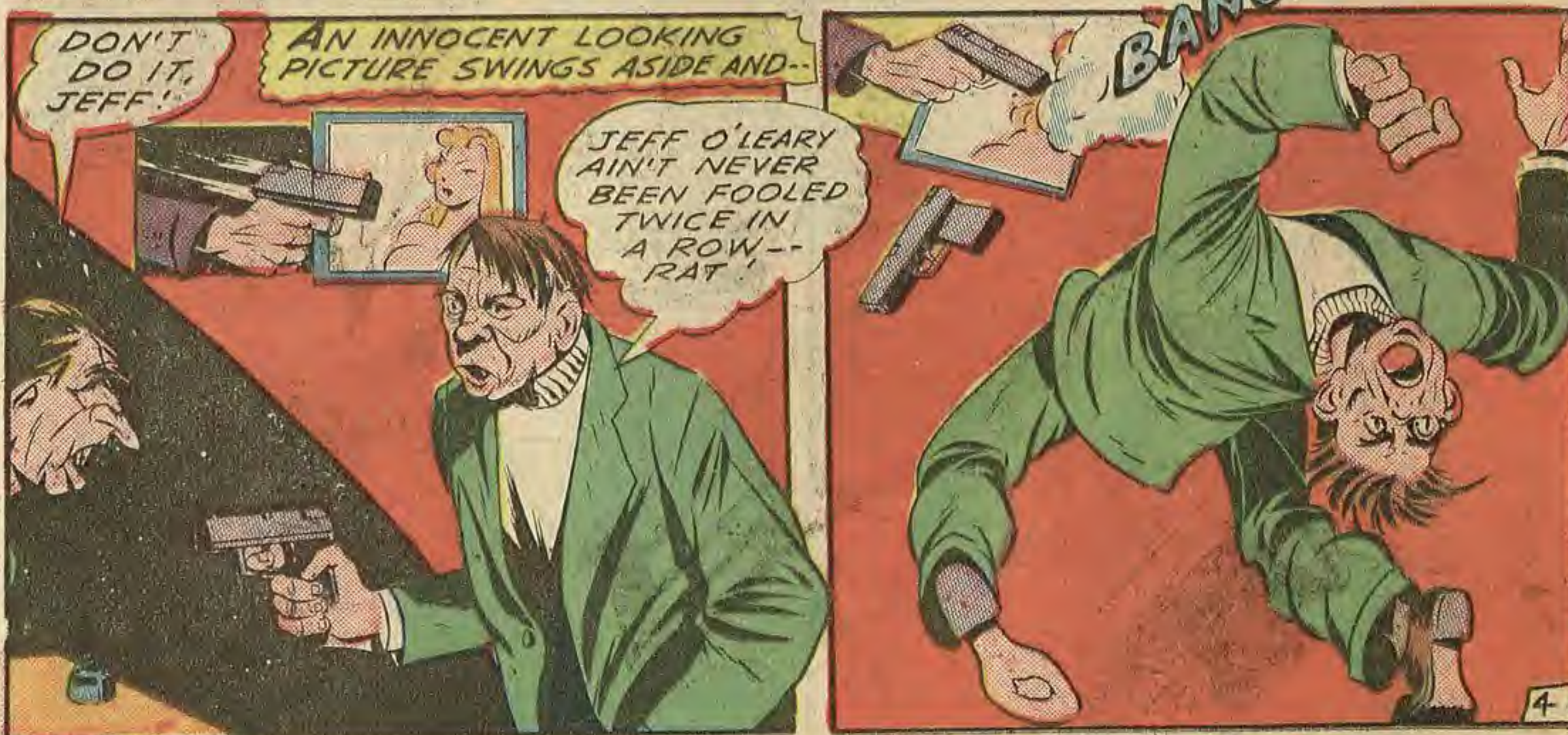
THE DIRTY RAT! HE TOLD ME AN' THE BOYS TO MEET HIM HERE. SAID HE HAD SOME-THING "TO TALK OVER WIT' US".

YEAH-- SOME TALK!

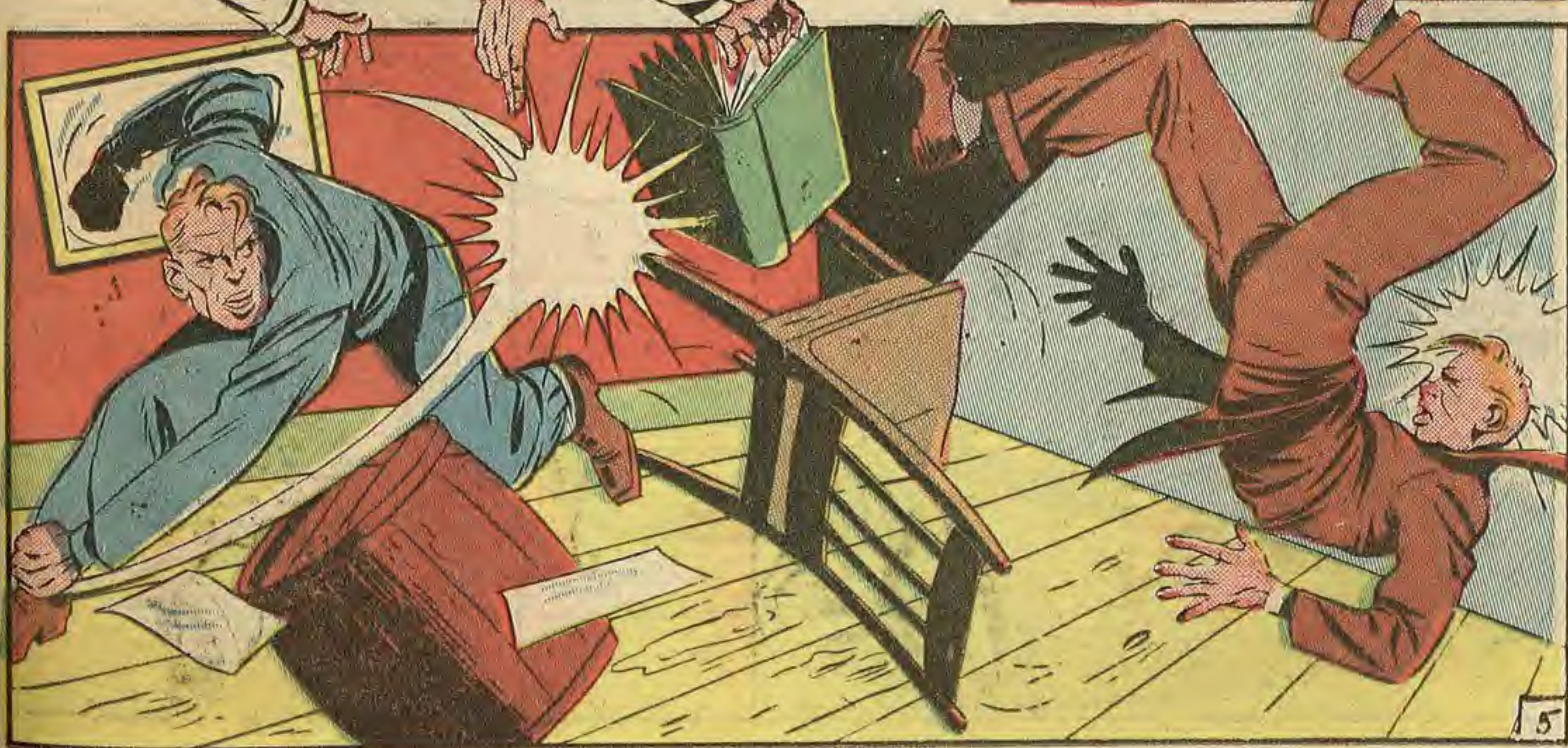
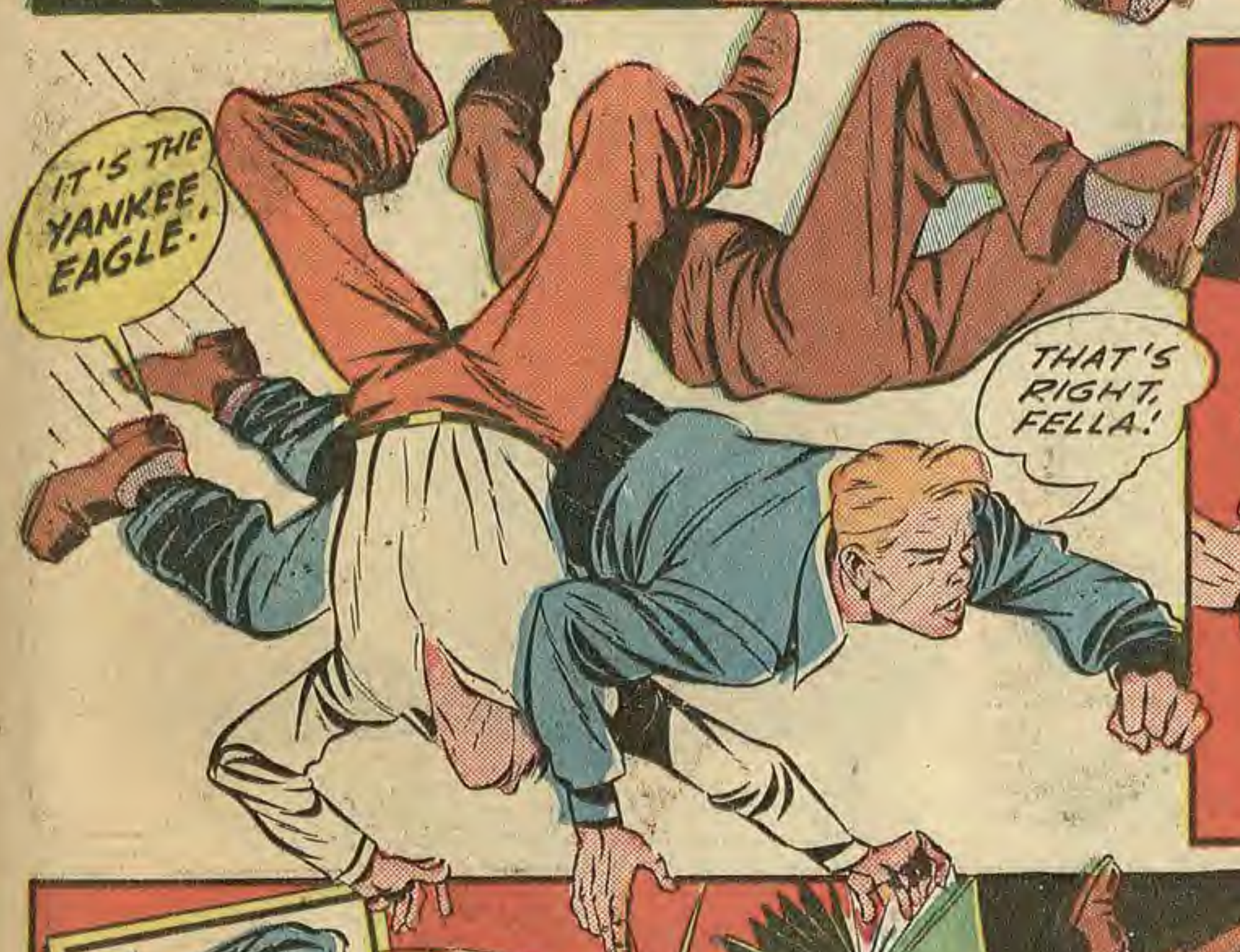
















I'M NOT MESSIN AROUND, FELLA-- AS YOU CAN SEE! -- OR CAN YOU?



AGAIN THE DEATH WEAPON PEEKS FROM ITS HIDING PLACE!

GET THE YANKEE EAGLE, BEFORE HE GETS US!



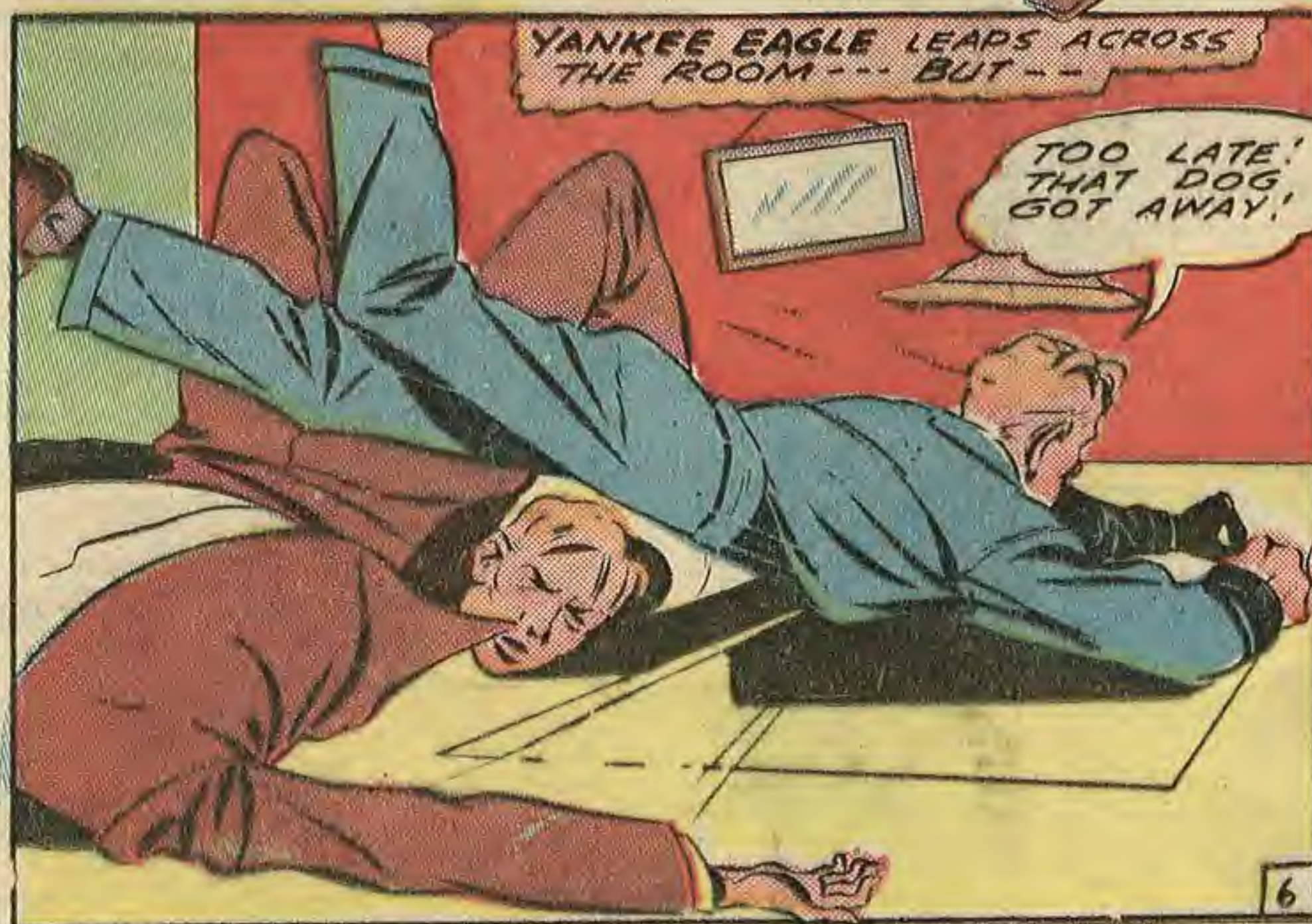
NOT SO FAST, BUDDY-- YOU MIGHT ASK PERMISSION FIRST!



HEY!

OOH-

YOU SEE, MR. YANKEE EAGLE -- BY PRESSING A LITTLE BUTTON I WILL DISAPPEAR FROM THIS TURMOIL! HA - HA -



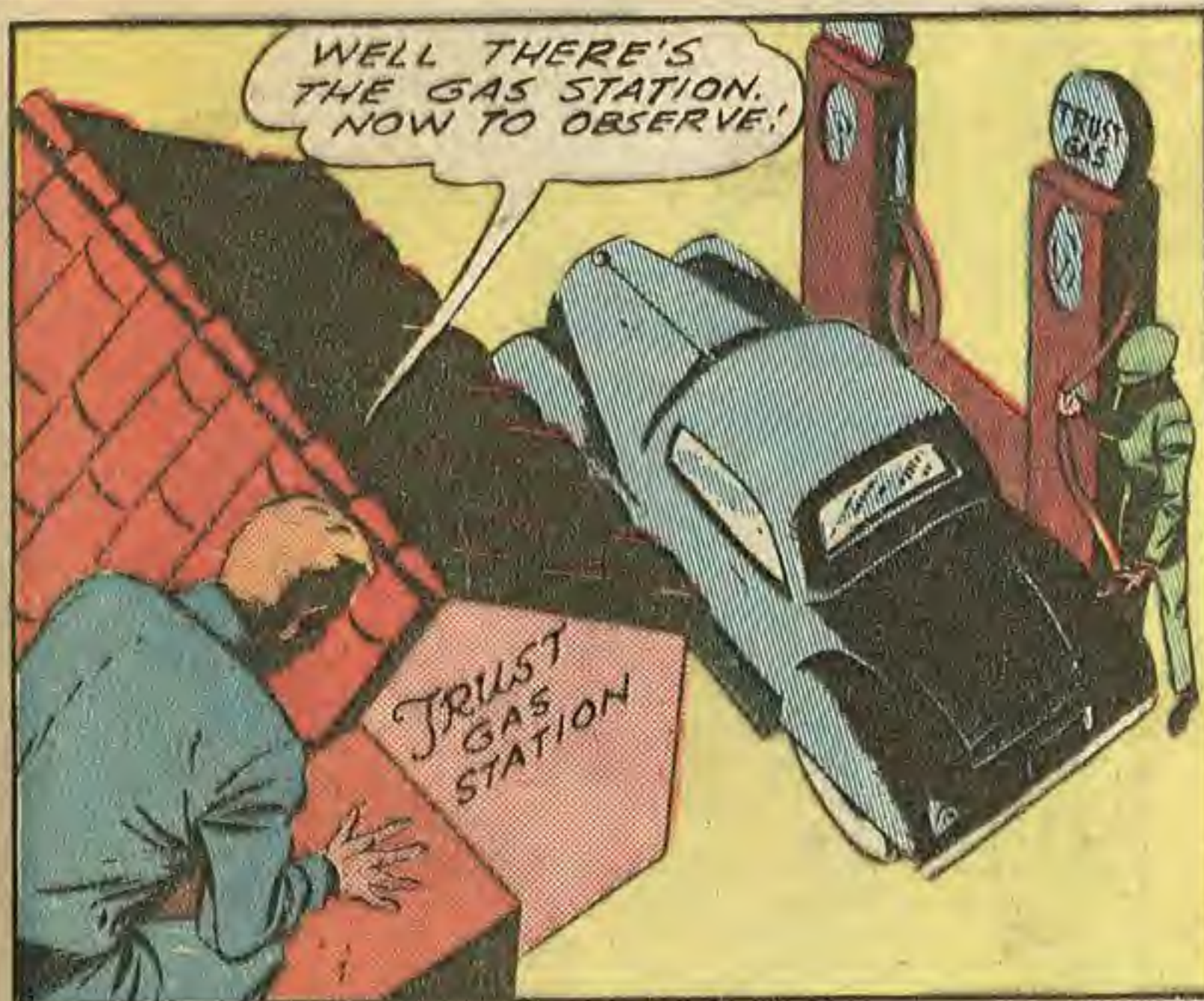
YANKEE EAGLE LEAPS ACROSS THE ROOM -- BUT --

TOO LATE! THAT DOG GOT AWAY!



WHY WORRY ABOUT THE CROW, BIG BOY? WE COULD GET ALONG VERY NICELY.









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THE YANKEE EAGLE  
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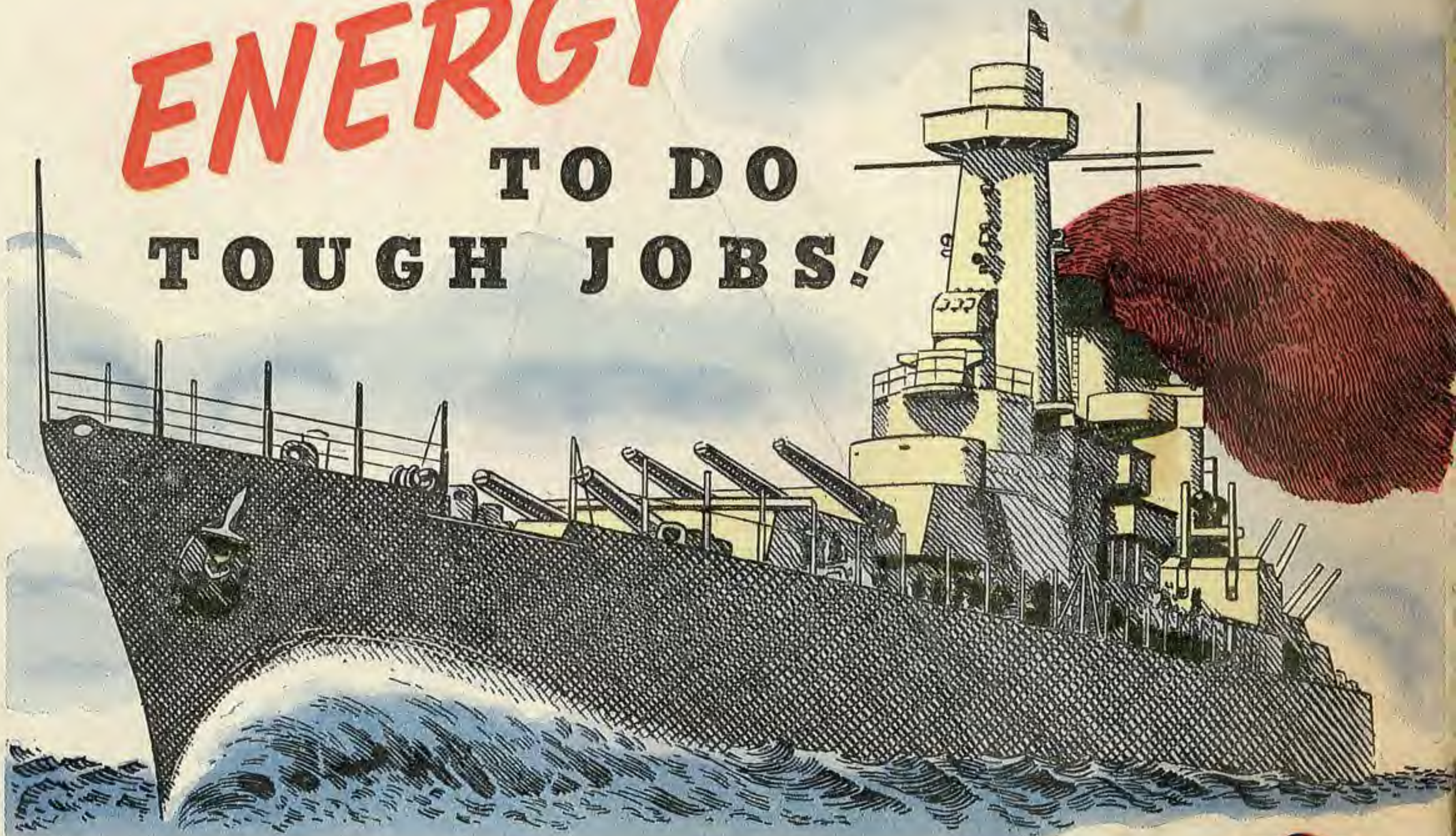
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